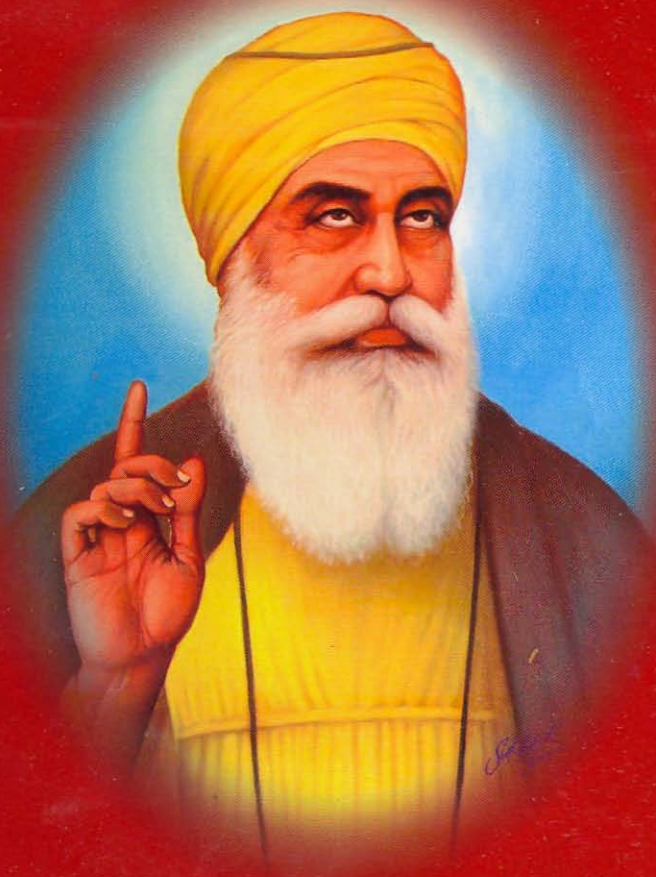


Guru Nanak Dev

Life and Teachings



KARTAR SINGH M.A.

GURU NANAK DEV

LIFE AND TEACHINGS

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CHAPTER 1

THE TIMES AND THE PEOPLE-I

After a brief description of the evils which prevailed in India, particularly in the Panjab at the time of Guru Nanak's advent, Bhai Gurdas says :-

'The Bounteous Lord heard the anguished cry, and so

Guru Nanak He sent to this world of woe.'

No what was that anguished cry ? By whom was it raised and why ? In other words, what were the ills and evils, and what were the wrongs to combat and mend or end, which God the Beneficent Father of humanity, deputed Guru Nanak to live, toil, and suffer among us mortals ? Indeed, for a proper and intelligent understanding of the content and significance of Guru Nanak's teachings, and for a just appreciation of the audacious magnitude of the work which he undertook and performed, it is essential that we should have a knowledge of the times in which he lived, the conditions under which he worked, and the people among whom he lived, and to whom his new message was addressed. We should know the moral, social and religious condition of the people, their economic and political status, and the mutual attitude of the rulers and the ruled.

India at that time was mostly under the Muslim rule. Nominally, the Sultan of Delhi was the Emperor of India. But actually, the country was divided up among several governors who were quite independent in their own provinces. Every one of them did with freedom and impunity, what he considered to be right in accordance with his whims and pleasure, or his own conception of morality, justice, and theological laws. The rulers and their agents and officials, big and small, were licentious and haughty despots who rode roughshod on the subjects. Guru Nanak depicts their character and conduct in some expressive words, which may be translated as under :

a) 'The kings are tigers and their officials are dogs.'

Var Malar.

b) The age is a knife, the kings are butchers, justice has taken wings and flown.

In this completely dark night of utter falsehood, the moon of truth is never seen to rise.

I have become perplexed in my search.

In the utter darkness I find no way.'

Var Majh.

Religion and *Jihad*, or exertion for the sake of religion, had come to be used as a ready excuse, and thorough justification for all sorts of irreligious acts of torture, oppression, and tyranny, particularly against the Hindus.

To understand the characteristics of the Muslim rule, it will be better to give a brief account of the rise of Islam and its spread in India. To quote S.M. Latif, the religion of Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad, 'an Arab of the tribe of Quraish, who announced to his countrymen a divine revelation which he was commanded to promulgate with the sword.....*Muhammad propagated his religion with the sword.* "The sword", said he, "is the key of paradise and hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail to the Faithful than two months of fasting and prayer." He who perished in *Jihad* or holy war, went straight of heaven. In paradise nymphs of fascinating beauty impatiently waited to greet his first approach. There the gallant martyrs lived for ever a life of bliss and pleasure, free from sorrows and liable to no inconvenience from excess in indulgence. They would possess thousands of beautiful slaves and get houses furnished with splendid gardens and with all the luxuries of life to live in. Such liberal promises of future pleasure, added to an immediate prospect of riches and wealth, were enough to kindle the frenzy of the desert population of Arabia. Their martial spirit was aroused and their sensual passions were inflamed'¹ They overran all neighbouring countries. Everywhere they satisfied to their heart's content their hunger for wealth and riches, and their highly inflamed sensual passions. Rape and rapine, fire and murder, marked their course. They were not slow to enjoy on earth the sensual pleasures which their exertions in the 'cause of God and Islam' made them entitled to in paradise.

In India the Muhammadan inroads began about the middle of the seventh century. Her worst woes began from those days. Her wealth was carried off by foreign invaders. Thousands of her sons and daughters were driven away to serve as slaves to the greed, lust and passions of the conquerors. These campaigns against the 'Infidels' were, no doubt, looked upon as 'holy

1. S. M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pp. 75-76.

wars', waged in 'the cause of God'. Having been assured by their Prophet that 'a drop of blood shed in the cause of God was of more avail to the Faithful than two months of fasting and prayer', the frenzied Muslim invaders shed seas of blood as an act of faith, and in confident hopes of winning God's grace and pleasure, and securing seats in paradise. 'Their fierce fanaticism, which regarded the destruction of non-Muslims as a service eminently pleasing to God, made them absolutely pitiless,'¹ After the Arabian conquerors came, the Afghan plunderers. The raids of Mahmud of Ghazni spread veritable ruin and horror in the land. Others followed him. Temples were destroyed, and idols were broken and trampled upon; Hindu schools and libraries were burnt, houses were plundered, women were raped, such Hindus as offered the least resistance, or gave even the feeblest vent to any resentment, were put to the sword exultingly, and the survivors—men, women, and children—were driven abroad and sold into slavery worse than death; all this 'for the glory of Islam'!

After centuries of such raids for plunder, pleasure and devastation, the Muhammadan invaders resolved to establish their rule in this land of inexhaustible wealth and pleasures. The Muhammadan occupation of the land, and its attendant conversion at the point of sword, forced on the people a foreign, despotic rule and a foreign culture. The Punjab was the first to be conquered. The proselytizing zeal of the conquerors only increased with their conquests. Invaders came in quick succession. For a little over three centuries, this struggle for suzerainty was hot and furious. Half a dozen dynasties tried to become Sultans of Delhi. But all of them failed to establish anything like a settled government. Whatever sway they had was limited to a small territory round about the capital. The rest of the country was in the hands of independent *Nawabs*, who were a law unto themselves. Miserable, indeed, was the condition of the people during this period. The Hindus suffered the most. Below are given a few examples of the treatment of the Hindus by the Muhammadan conquerors and rulers of India. culled by Macauliffe from the writings of some Muhammadan historians :-

- (1) '*In Kamilu-t Twarikh* by ibn Asir, it is recorded that Shahab-ud-Din, King of Ghazni, the virtual founder of the Muhammadan Empire in India (A.D. 1170-

1. V. A. Smith, *India in the Mohammadan Period*, p. 257.

1206), put Prithvi Raj, King of Ajmer and Delhi, to death in cold blood. He massacred thousands of the inhabitants of Ajmer and reserved the remainder for slavery. At Benaras, too, the slaughter of the Hindus was immense. None were spared except women and children who were led into slavery, and the carnage of the men was carried on until, as it has been said, the earth grew weary of the monotony.'

- (2) 'Hasan Nizam-i-Naishapuri states in his *Taj-ul-Ma'asir* that Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (A.D. 1194 to 1210) demolished the Hindu temples in Meerut and erected mosques on their sites. In the city of Koil, now called Aligarh, he converted the Hindu inhabitants to Islam by the sword, and beheaded all who adhered to their religion. In Kalinjar he destroyed one hundred and thirteen temples, built mosques on their sites, massacred over one lakh Hindus, and made slaves of about fifty thousand more. It is said that the place became black as pitch with the decomposing bodies of the Hindus.
 - (3) 'In the *Tabagat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-ul-Siraj it is stated that when Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji conquered Bihar, he put to sword about one lakh Brahmins, and burnt a valuable library of ancient Sanskrit books.'
 - (4) 'Abdulla Wassaf writes in his *Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar* that when Ala-ul-Din Khilji (1295-1316) captured the city of Cambayat at the head of the gulf of Cambay, he killed the adult male Hindu inhabitants for the glory of Islam, set flowing seas of blood, sent the women of the country with all their gold, silver, and jewels, to his own home, and made about twenty thousand maidens his private slaves.'
- 'Ala-ud-Din once asked his *Qazi* what the Muhammadan law prescribed for Hindus was. The *Qazi* replied, 'Hindus are like the earth; if silver is demanded from them, they ought, with the greatest humility, to offer gold. And if a Muhammadan desire to spit into a Hindu's mouth, the Hindu should open it wide for the purpose. God created Hindus to be slaves of the Muhammadans. The Prophet hath ordained that, if the Hindus do not accept Islam, they should be imprisoned, tortured, and finally put to death, and their property confiscated.'
- (5) 'Amir Khusrau writes in his *Twarikh Alai or Khazain-ul-Futuh* that when the Emperor Feroz Shah Tughlak (A.D. 1351-88) took the city of Bhilsa in Bhopal, he destroyed all its Hindu temples, took away their idols, placed them in front of his fort, and had them daily bathed with the blood of a thousand Hindus.'

1. Summarised from Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, vol. i, Introduction.

'He caused the Hindus of Kohana, who had built a new temple, to be executed before the palace ' as a warning that no Zimmi (Scil. non-Muslim paying *Jizya* as the price of his life) could follow such wicked practices in a Musalman country,'¹

After the Tughlaks came the Sayyids and the Lodhis. All of them were fierce bigots, 'Their reigns, too, offer little but scenes of bloodshed, tyranny, and treachery.'²

This brings us to the times in which Guru Nanak was born. Behlol Lodhi was then the Sultan of Delhi (1450 to 1488 A.D.). By the time that the Guru grew to manhood, Sikandar Lodhi (A.D. 1488 to 1517) had ascended the throne. Under him, the state assumed a thoroughly 'theocratic character and officially imposed Islam on the Hindus.'² 'He was firmly attached to the Muhomedan religion and made a point of destroying all Hindu temples and places of learning. To a holy man who said that to interfere with the religion of the subjects was not proper for a king, Sikandar, drawing his sword, said, 'Wretch ! do you maintain the propriety of the Hindu religion ?' He imprisoned Ahmad Khan, the Governor of Lucknow, because he had, viewing the moral practices of the Hindus, ceased to persecute them. A Brahman, whose name was Boodhan, being upraised by some Muhomedans on account of his faith, maintained that all religions, if sincerely practised, were equally acceptable to God. Sikandar summoned him to defend his opinion in his presence against over a dozen Muhomedan

1. A. Smith, *India in the Mohammadan Period* p. 250.

2. Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*, p. 481. Read also what Elphinstone writes in this connection :-

'He (Sikandar Lodhi) was one of the few bigots who have sat on the throne of India. He destroyed the temples in the towns and forts that he took from Hindus, and he forbade the people to perform pilgrimages, and bathing on certain festivals at places on the sacred streams within his own dominions. On one occasion he carried his zeal to cruelty and injustice; for a Brahmin having been active in propagating the doctrine that "all religions, if sincerely practised, were equally acceptable to God", he summoned him to defend his opinion, in his presence, against twelve Muhomedan divines; and on his refusing to renounce his tolerant maxims, put him to death',

History of India, p. 410.

divines. After many arguments the learned men were of the opinion that unless the infidel, who maintained the Hindu worship to be equally acceptable to God as that of the True Faith, renounced his error and adopted the Muhomedan religion, he ought to suffer death. The Hindu refused to apostatise and was accordingly executed, while the Mussalman doctors were rewarded with gifts.¹ 'The saint Kabir lived under Sikandar Lodhi and was tortured by him.'²

We have to remember that it was during the reign of this 'ferocious bigot', as Smith calls him, that Guru Nanak began his crusade against the tyranny of irresponsible bigots and autocrats, and the corrupt practices of Islam, and declared from the housetops that all human beings were the sons of the same Father and, hence, equal in all respects, 'in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes'. As we shall see, Guru Nanak was arrested under this Emperor's orders on the reports of the latter's '*Qardars*' who informed his majesty that a *faqir*, whose tenets were different from those of the *Quran* and the *Vedas*, was openly preaching to the people, and the importance which he was assuming might, in the end, prove serious to the state.'³

It has been seen, on the testimony of a Muslim writer that it was religious fanaticism as well as a desire for plunder and sensual satisfaction that had prompted the Muslims to invade India. When established here, their officially avowed policy was the propagation of Islam. For the achievement of this 'holy' object, all ways and means, however unholy, were deemed proper and justified. Persecution, oppression, bribery, economic and political disabilities, and all other conceivable means were employed to force the Hindus to forsake their religion. In the theory of Muslim State the infidels had no place. God was the Supreme Lord. The Muhammadan king was His Deputy on earth. As such, it was his duty to spread, as far as lay in his power, the religion of God as proclaimed by the Prophet. All other religions were false and, hence, not worthy to live. No dissent from Islam was to be tolerated. The faithful was commanded to convert or kill the infidels wher-

1. Summarized from Ishwari Prasad's book referred to above.

2. Macauliffe, *cit. op.* vol. i, xlv,

3. S.M. Latif, *cit. op.* p. 245.

ever they were found.¹ They had no right to exist in a Muslim state. If, however, their conversion or extinction was not practicable or advisable, they could be permitted to live as a necessary evil; but, as the price of their life thus spared, they had to pay *Jizia* and behave with humility and reverence becoming a subject race.²

This policy, which had "divine" sanction behind it, gave free reins to the lust, greed and passions of all who had any power over the people. The lowest vied with the highest in showing their fanatic zeal for Islam; for such exertion not only yielded immediate gratification, but also promised God's grace and lasting pleasures in Paradise. We can well imagine the condition of the Hindu *zimmies*, i.e. those who paid *Jizia* as the price of their life. As S.M. Latif says, 'Great jealousy and hatred existed in those days between the Hindus and the Muhammadans' and the whole non-Musalman population was subject to persecution by the Muhammadan rulers.'³ The result was that crime, corruption, and sin prevailed all round. Both the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, were deep down in moral degradation.

This moral degradation, born of power freely exercised and brutally misapplied, affected also the religious belief and practice of the victors. The impact of Hinduism on Islam was also not without its effects. Wholesale conversion of the lower ranks of the Hindu society necessitated a modification of the uncompromising monotheism of Islam. The new converts could not be made to give up entirely their gods and deities that had become too closely interwoven with the thoughts and habits of the people. They were

-
1. But when the sacred months are elapsed, then shed the blood of the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them and lie in wait for them at every place. But if they turn and keep up the prayer and pay the stated alms, then let them alone on their path. And if any one of the pagans ask thee for refuge, then give him refuge till he hears God's word.' *Holy Quran, IX. 5,6.* 'Say to the infidels that if they desist from their unbelief, what is now past shall be forgiven them. But if they return to it-then fight against them till strife be at an end and the religion be entirely God's.'

Holy Quran, VIII, 38,39.

2. 'With regard to the idolators of a non-Arabic country, Shafi maintains that destruction is incurred by them also; but other learned doctors agree that it is lawful to reduce them to slavery, thus allowing them, as it were, a respite during which it may please God to direct them into the right path, but making, at the same time, their persons and substance subservient to the cause of Islam.' Hughes *Encyclopaedia of Islam* quoted by Sir J. N. Sarkar
3. *History of the Panjab*, p. 240.

unable to conceive of God who could be approached only through the Arabian Prophet : specially as they were not given an idol, picture, or any other likeness, to aid their visualization of the Prophet. Such abstract conceptions, unaided by visible representation, were too much for them. So the Muslim divines had to provide for the need of the new converts. The result was that numerous intercessors were created and held up for homage in opposition to the Hindu gods and goddesses. There were other reactions also. 'Nor did the proud distinctions of caste and the reverence shown to the *Brahmins* fail to attract the notice and admiration of the barbarous victors. *Sheikhs* and *Saiyads* had an innate holiness assigned to them, and Mughals and *Pathans* copied the exclusiveness of the Rajputs. New superstitions also emulated old credulity, "*Pirs*" and "*Shahids*", Saints and Martyrs, equalled Krishna and Bhairon in the number of their miracles, and the Muhammadans almost forgot the unity of God in the multitude of intercessors whose aid they implored."¹ By and by, the Muslim divines, *Sheikhs*, *Saiyads*, *Mullas*, and *Faqirs*, came to have the same sway over the superstitious minds of the Indian Muhammadans as the *Brahmins*, *Pandits*, and *Sadhus* had over those of the Hindus. Magic, spells, and penances, in imitation of the Hindu practices, were freely employed to maintain and strengthen this hold on the credulous Muslim masses. Unity of God came to be at best a half-forgotten ideal. The *Mullas*, with their wiles and superstitions, held the field. The Muhammadan masses understood little of the real teachings of the Arabian Prophet. The *Mullas* and *Maulvis*, who should have enlightened the people in this matter, only tried to keep their hold on them by diverting their attention to the non-essentials. Hence, with most of the Muhammadans, as with their Hindu neighbours, religion had come to be a matter of forms, ceremonies, and observances. The place of the Hindu idols had been taken by tombs of *Pirs*, *Faqirs* and *Shahids*, which came to be regarded as places of pilgrimage and worship. The ignorant Muhammadan masses, under the patronage of *Mullas* and *Faqirs*, visited the tombs on special days with suitable offerings, bowed, knelt, and prostrated before them, and offered prayers for all sorts of worldly gifts and benefits.

Thus, with the Muhammadans, religion had come to mean but little more than an injunction for the persecution of the Hindus, a sanction for all sorts of licentiousness, vice, and corruption; and a system requiring the performance of meaningless, very often un-Islamic, rites and ceremonies. It no longer inspired its votaries to a life of devotion, morality, self-sacrifice, and human kindliness.

1. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 33.

CHAPTER 2

THE TIMES AND THE PEOPLE -II

The Hindus have been pre- eminently a religious people. India has been the birth-place of many religions and systems of religious philosophy. Even at the time when other peoples were immersed in savage ignorance, the Hindus in India could boast of a civilization of a very high standard. But, unfortunately, the Hindu society took a wrong turning in quite early days. A queer division of labour was devised by its scholars, who were called *Brahmins*. To ensure perfect leisure and comfort for themselves they invented *Varnashram Dharma* or the caste-system. The risky and the arduous tasks of fighting the enemies and producing and providing the necessities and comforts of life, were entrusted to others. The priests took upon themselves the duty of offering prayers and performing religious rites and ceremonies on behalf of the combatants, the tillers of soil, the artisans, and the menials. The leisure thus obtained was utilized by these clever people for devising complicated and impressive ceremonials, which could not be performed but by themselves. Gradually, they came to be the custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge. The common people understood little of the sacred books, portions of which were read out to them by the priests on special occasions. In fact, Brahmins alone could study the scriptures. They would not instruct others. The worst aspect of the caste-system was that a large part of the people were denied the solace of religion and prayer, or a direct approach to God and gods. God was not for them. Religion was not their concern. They were not permitted even to hear the sacred hymns or approach the idols and temples. Savage and severe were the punishments prescribed for such of these wretched people as transgressed the law.¹ They had to rest content with serving the higher classes. Their touch or even shadow polluted the 'Twice-born', as the higher classes called themselves. Such was the miserable lot of

1. 'It is laid down in the twelfth chapter of the *Institutes of Gautam* that if a *Shudra* even hear the *Veds*, his ears must be stopped either with molten lead or wax; if he read the *Veds*, his tongue must be cut out; and if he possess the *Veds*, his body must be cut in twain.' Macauliffe, *cit. op.* vol.i, p.1, f.n.

the unfortunate *Shudras*. That of *Vaishyas* was only a little better. They, too, had to toil and moil for others. They, too, could not study the sacred books. *Brahmins* did that work for them. Hence the toilers had to support the *Brahmin* scholars. Thus the caste-system came to be a source of much evil and misery, and an excuse for manifold tyranny.

By the time of Guru Nanak the Hindu religion was at its lowest ebb. Its spirit was well-nigh dead, and, in its place, there had gradually sprung up a Brahmanical legalism; a religion of forms and ceremonials devoid of any sense, or meaning. Religion had been reduced to a mockery. It 'was confined to special ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The worship of idols wherever they were permitted to exist, pilgrimage to Ganges and other sacred places, wherever they were allowed, the observance of certain ceremonies like the marital and funeral rites, the obedience to the mandates of the *Brahmans* and lavishing charitable gifts upon them, constituted almost the whole of Hinduism as it was then current among the masses,'¹

The Brahmins had, as stated above, gradually elevated themselves into an ecclesiastical hierarchy and become the selfmade custodians of law and religion. They considered themselves to be a specially favoured, a privileged class. 'They had constituted themselves not only as the custodians of religion, but also as dispensers of religion and religious knowledge. They alone could study the sacred books.'² The people, in their estimation, were of a lower intellectual and religious order, devoid of the necessary capacity for understanding the scriptures. But the Brahmins, too, had come to be completely devoid of any real spirit of religion. Some of them still had the scriptures by heart. But they neither understood nor practised the teachings contained in the sacred texts which they mechanically repeated in hopes of salvation. Very often, in their practical life, they were just the opposite of what the scriptures required them to be. They had fallen, both morally and spiritually.

1. Sir G. C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 5.

2. 'All learning was in the hands of the priesthood, and this admittedly led to serious abuses.' The great *Pandits* and *Brahmins* communicated their instructions in Sanskrit, 'which they deemed the language of gods'. Hence religious instruction could be availed of by only the learned among even the high-caste Hindus. It was 'forbidden to instruct *Shudars* and women in the sacred lore.'

Still they not only claimed to be advisers to the multitudes of Hindu gods regarding the gifts to be bestowed on the mortals, or the evils to be averted from their heads, but also pretended to be a mysterious means of goods; traffic between this world and the next. In that capacity they undertook to transport food, clothing, utensils, etc., given them for their own use, to the dead relatives, ancestors, or gods of the pious, ignorant and superstitious people. The *Brahmin* thus ate sumptuous dinners, enjoyed all sorts of material gifts and pleasures, and assured his dupes that every thing had been passed on to the desired persons in the other world. Of course, the devotee had to pay adequate conveyance charges.¹

This state of affairs, which had come about gradually, was productive of at least three noticeable results: a religious starvation and stagnation on the part of the great mass of people; the creation of a haughty, self-righteous, and domineering ecclesiastical hierarchy; and the splitting up of the Hindu society into many sections which were very often mutually hostile and jealous. Thus religion, instead of being a unifying principle and a source of moral and spiritual elevation, had come to be the cause of mental and spiritual slavery, moral degeneration, and disruption of the Hindu society.

If the Brahmins monopolized religious knowledge and, thus, brought about religious and moral degeneration of the Hindu society, the part which the warrior class, the *Kashattriyas*, played after the Muhammadan occupation of the land, was quite as baneful. One by one, they had found themselves no match for the foreign invaders. Making a virtue of necessity, they had thrown in their lot with the Muhammadan rulers. Proud of their high descent, they despised the common people. They had no sympathy with the masses. Rather they joined hands with the Muhammadan rulers in their exploitation and oppression of the Hindu populace. Mutually jealous and disunited, they had not been able to offer a united front to the invaders and had thus allowed the land to be conquered and occupied. Their mutual jealousy made them rejoice over the fall and humiliation of each other at the hands of the Muhammadan rulers. This state of affairs had made them sink still further. They grew weak and degraded physically, morally, and spiritually. Thoughts of liberty and independence never disturbed them. They were content to bear the yoke,

1. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*.

because in that way alone they could enjoy their lands and positions. They had come to be pillars of the tyrannical rule of the Muslims and willing agents of their oppression and persecution.

All the same, the masses were bitterly against the galling yoke of tyranny. But their so called natural leaders, who should have liberated them, had joined hands with the oppressors. We can imagine how hard it must have gone with the common people. They toiled and moiled all their lives, but were ill-fed and ill-treated. Others, those in power, snatched away a major portion of their hard-earned substance and left them poor, unhappy, and starving. For their being engaged in useful professions they were despised and insulted.

Thus the *Brahmins* and the *Kashattriyas* had ceased to do their respective duty of instructing and defending the people. The onslaught of the Muhammadans had unnerved them. The severe proselytizing campaign started and steadily maintained by the Muhammadans spread confusion and consternation among the Hindu ranks. In order to appease and please their Muhammadan masters and neighbours, the Hindus adopted the latter's language, dress, and ways of life. They meekly bore all insults and dishonours, so that they might be suffered just to live. In short, they became totally demoralized. "The instinct of self-preservation, in any form, and at any sacrifice, became supreme and all-absorbing. The priests, the hereditary guardians of Hinduism, lazy and lifeless like all hereditary incumbents of high positions, could not unite all Hindus together, and by one united action hurl back the waves of invasion. Not being able to play the part of Charles Martel or Peter, the Hermit, and fight in the open field, they shut themselves up in the impregnable fortress of caste. All who were privileged were taken in, the rest were allowed to fight their own battle as best as they could. The result was that whereas the majority of the twice-born Hindus were saved, the majority of others fell an easy prey to the proselytizing zeal of Islam." Thus the vicious circle went on. The conversion tightened the caste restrictions and a tightening of the caste restrictions led to further conversions. And so on.

On the other hand, the impact of Islam on Hinduism was producing noticeable effects. "The influence of a new people, who equalled or surpassed *Kashattriyas* in valour, who despised the sanctity of Brahmins, and who

authoritatively proclaimed the unity of God and His abhorrence of images, began gradually to operate on the minds of the multitudes of India and recalled even the learned to the simple tenets of the *Vedas*, which Shanker Acharya had disregarded. The operation was necessarily slow, for the imposing system of powers and emanations had been adapted with much industry to the local or peculiar divinities of tribes and races, and in the lapse of ages, the legislation of Manu had become closely interwoven with the thoughts and habits of the people." Still the heaven was cast. The popular belief became un-settled. People's confidence was shaken. They could no longer feel contented with what the *Brahmins* had to tell them of God and gods.

Several attempts were made by gifted Hindu scholars and saints to bring about order in this ever-growing chaos. As Cunningham puts it. 'Ramanand and Gorakh had preached religious equality, and Chaitan had repeated that faith levelled caste. Kabir had denounced images, and appealed to the people in their own tongue, and Valabh had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and able men appear to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man's social condition to be unworthy of a thought. They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft, or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented Quietists, or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them.'¹

Such were the times. The country was mostly under the Muslim rule. With but a few exceptions, the rulers were ferocious bigots and savage tyrants. Their officials were corrupt and unscrupulous. There was little of justice for the weak and the poor, and next to none for the Hindus. Islam was being propagated with a free use of the sword, persecution, persuasion, and every other means, fair or foul Hindu temples were being demolished and replaced by mosques; erection of new ones was prohibited, and religious observances and pilgrimages were banned. The state on things in the Panjab

1. Cunningham *cit. op.* p. 38.

was the worst. "This province was the first to be conquered. It lay between two powerful Mohammadan capitals, Delhi and Cabul (Kabul). The Moslem Government was most thoroughly established there. The wave of proselytism had spread there with an overwhelming force, and the Panjab contained the largest number of converts to Islam. All vestige of Hindu greatness had been obliterated....Those who had escaped conversion, had lost almost all that lends dignity and grace to life and distinguishes religion from superstition and cant."¹ Those who did not relish such a life of dishonour and servility, and had a religious bent of mind, 'had sought safety from persecution and death in loneliness of the desert or the retirement of the forest, and lived singleminded investigators of Truth.'²

Thus, with regard to political status and social and religious rights, the Hindus were in a very sorry predicament. Their relations with their powerful Muhammadan neighbours were generally not at all happy. In the words of Latif, 'great jealousy and hatred existed in those times between the Hindus and Muhammadans.' Among themselves, too, the Hindus were far from being united or at peace. Apart from the political rivalry of those who had managed to retain power and position at the huge sacrifice of honour and independence, there was the accursed system of castes, dividing the people into mutually hostile groups and condemning a large section of the people to a most wretched and despicable condition. It was no wonder, then, that the majority of the lower classes found it better to join the ranks of the oppressors rather than be spurned by the high-born Hindus and persecuted by the powerful Muhammadans. In fact, the new converts to Islam were generally fiercer bigots and more fiery fanatics than the rest. The natural leaders of the Hindus had allied themselves with the Muhammadan tyrants and sucked the people's blood. The priests, who were the custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge, had become base and corrupt, and had reduced religion to a mockery; a matter of forms and symbols, lacking real life and spirit. There was a deep degradation all round. The masses were sunk low in vice, ignorance and superstition, and were victims of tyranny and oppression in several forms. The impact of Islam and Hinduism on each other had unsettled the popular belief of both the Hindus and the Muhammadans. The

1. Sir G. C. Narang, *cit op.*

2. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*. vol. i, Int. p. xli.

Mullas or Muhammadan divines were as devoid of true religion as the Hindu priests were. The People were, therefore, dissatisfied with the existing religions.

A few attempts made to introduce reforms had met with but partial and limited success. Moreover, no religious reformer had appeared in the Panjab where, as already stated, the state of things was the darkest and the need for reforms was the greatest.

There has been a general belief among all people since the earliest times that great leaders and teachers, founders of new systems are born in times of great social and political depression and religious confusion. Indeed, all great religions of the world had their birth in the darkest of such ugly times. To the Indian people Lord Krishna had proclaimed long ago :

“Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharta, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I myself come forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age.”

There was thus a tradition, which had, with the steadily worsening state of things, developed into a firm conviction, that there soon would come a Deliverer who would deliver the wretched people out of the hands of their enemies, and reform or liquidate the oppressors. It was also believed that the time had come for the fulfilment of the prophecy recorded in the *Bhavwikhu Puran* and for the promise held forth in the *Gita* being made good.

The tradition and the belief turned out to be true. In the Panjab itself, where the pressure of tyranny and oppression was the heaviest, where the grip of the bigoted rulers was the tightest, where the darkness of sin and ignorance was the thickest, and where the condition of the people, particularly that of the Hindus, was the worst and most deplorable, was born a Great One who was to work veritable wonders and to start a peaceful, powerful, and far-reaching revolution in the prevalent order of things; who was ‘to call upon his fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the corruption of ages; who was to be an apostle of love, freedom, and equality, placing man and woman, the king and the beggar, the high-caste and the low-caste, on social and spiritual equality, who was to found a Holy Fellowship, ‘a Brotherhood of God. fearing republicans’, where the lowest was to be equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes’; who was to preach a religion of the

heart as distinguished from a religion of external forms and unavailing ritual, and to inculcate love and devotion as well as the lesson that as men sow so shall they reap; who was to condemn selfishness, avarice, and worldliness in general, but was also to show that the highest worldly ambition was not incompatible with the purest and godliest life; and to put the seal of his sanction and approval on all worldly pursuits, provided they were not indulged in at the cost of righteousness and truth; who was to condemn the practice of those who, unwilling to fight the battle of life, retired from the world under the pretence of cultivating 'spirituality', and lived as parasites on the earnings of others; who was to preach that 'Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is true living'; who was to pull his countrymen out of the deep pit of despondency and demoralization into which they had sunk and to improve their moral and spiritual tone; who was to fill them with new hopes and aspirations, to arouse in them till-then unknown consciousness of common nationality, and to set them to march on the road to emancipation from all bondage; who was to raise his voice, fearless of consequences, against injustice, tyranny, and oppression¹; who was to supply the steel for the sword with which the evil-doers and tyrants were to be struck down and destroyed; who was 'to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Guru Gobind Singh to fire the minds of his countrymen with a nationality', to sow the seed of a nation of Saint Warriors who were to snatch the sword from the tyrants' hands and to purge them of the filth which filled their hearts and brutalized their souls; who was to preach, far and wide, a doctrine which would cement all sections of the people and bind them together with unbreakable bonds of sympathy, fellow-feeling, love, and mutual regard. That great personality was Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion and creator of the Sikh nation.

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1. He was to thus describe the Muhammadan rulers and the state of India in his time :-

(a) The kings are tigers and their officials are all dogs.

(b) This age is a knife, kings are butchers, justice has taken wings and flown. In this completely dark night of falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise.

I have become perplexed in my search;

In the darkness I find no way.'

CHAPTER 3

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Guru Nanak, who was to do all this and more, was born at Talwandi, in the present district of Shekhupura (Pakistan), on the third day of the light half of Baisakh in *Samvat* year 1526, corresponding to fifteenth day of April 1469, A.D.¹ Talwandi is now called Nankana Sahib in honour of the great world-teacher to whom it had the honour to give birth.² It was then a small village situated in the midst of a dense forest and waste-land, away from seats of power and tyranny, away from centres of learning and dry philosophy, far off from the arena of political strife and struggle, and away from the horrid, sickening scenes, enacted by religious bigotry allied with political power. It was in the seclusion of such a village that the great World-Teacher was born.

Rai Bhoie, a Rajput of *Bhatti* clan and retainer of the ruler of Delhi, had been its founder and proprietor. He had owned about a dozen villages around Talwandi. After his death, his son, Rai Bular, had succeeded him. Both Rai Bular and his father were new converts to Islam. They had accepted the religion of the rulers under the effects of force or the influence of some other powerful persuasion. But, unlike most converts, they were neither fanatics nor bigots. Rai Bhoie was a warrior and had made himself the master of a great tract of fertile land. People of both persuasions were treated by him equally. In consequence, he had come to be loved and honoured by all. His son, Rai Bular, was of a quiet, religious temperament. He loved the society of *Sadhus*

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1. The birth anniversary of the Guru is nowadays celebrated on the fullmoon day of *Kartick*. For a discussion of the question whether the Guru was born in *Baisakh* or *Kartick*, please turn to Appendix A.
 2. The fact that, like numerous others, this holy place of theirs, along with its vast fertile lands and property, has been taken away from them and they are not permitted to visit, maintain, and manage it according to their wishes and traditions, is a source of deep and constantly gnawing grief to the Sikhs. It is no wonder, then, that in their daily prayers they fervently call upon the Benign Almighty Lord of all to so arrange the scheme of things that they may again be able to visit, serve, maintain and manage the holy place and its properties as they used to do before the Partition.

and *Faqirs*. He had none of the fire of hatred that was then raging in the breasts of the Indian followers of the Arabian Prophet. This was, no doubt, partly due to his being out of touch with the outside Muhammadan world, where bigotry was making a hell of this land. Talwandi was away from the tumults and excitements, brutality and fanaticism of the outer world. But there was also a deeper source of his toleration for his erstwhile co-religionists. As a truly religious man and not a fanatic, Rai Bular was inspired with sympathy for the downtrodden persecuted race. We shall find how this human touch in his nature made him discern, long before many others did, the true light in the Divine Child who was born in his village.

Guru Nanak's father, Mehta Kalian Das, more popularly known as Mehta Kalu, was the Agent and Chief Accountant of Rai Bular. Thus he was materially quite well off. He belonged to the Bedi section of the *Kashattriya* caste. Because of his position and personality, he commanded the respect of the whole *tappa* or district.¹ Rai Bular had full confidence in him. A son and the rain are, in India, always regarded as welcome gifts of God. The birth of a son, especially that of a first one, is an occasion of great rejoicing. But the joy that filled the heart of Mehta Kalu was unusually great. The attendant nurse had told him that she had never seen a birth of a babe like this before. To her simple, unsophisticated mind the birth-chamber had appeared surcharged with something supernatural. She had heard gay, invisible voices hailing the baby's advent into the world of mortals. The baby itself had looked quite different from all she had seen before. It had smiled like a grown-up wise man, instead of crying like a new-born, helpless babe. There had been seen a halo around his head. We can imagine the delight and happiness which must have filled the heart of Mehta Kalu, when he heard these details from the lips of the simple nurse.

Like all Hindus, the happy father sent for the family astrologer, Hardial, to draw up the baby's horoscope. On hearing what the nurse had to say, Hardial is said to have been filled with a mysterious awe and wonder. Before consulting his books and determining the stars under which the baby had been born, he wanted to have a look at it. It was an unusual request, but Hardial's importunities prevailed. The astrologer, who had seen hundreds of

1. 'Nanak's father was a respectable man, and was treated by the village people as their head,' Latif, *cit. op.* p. 241.

babies in his life, discerned in this one a light that was to fill all lands and to guide all people to the Eternal Abode of the Supreme Lord; a peace that was to soothe the ruffled breasts of a whole world; a strange, sober, solemn joy that was to lighten the burden of many a weary forlorn, oppressed heart; a spiritual grandeur that was to elevate unto the bosom of his Lord the restless, wandering, world-beaten spirits of his fellowmen; an all-embracing love that was to knit all Hindus, Muslims, and all the rest-into a Holy Fellowship of Soldiers of God and Brothers of Mankind; and a compassion that was to ameliorate the wretched condition of human beings, oppressed and repressed by their powerful fellowmen. The astrologer bowed before the singular infant. He congratulated Mehta Kalu, saying, "Fortunate, indeed, art thou, O Mehta, to have such a one as thy son. He will be a unique king, holding sway over vast dominions and adored by all sections of humanity. His fame and name will spread far beyond the frontiers of India. Though I shall not live long enough to witness his conquest of the world, yet I am happy to have seen him. I am blessed."

Sweet as honey were these words to Mehta Kalu and his wife, *Mata Tripta*. Kalu was a man of the world. He rejoiced to think that his only son would acquire fame, wealth and rule. In accordance with the practice, which somewhat still prevails in this land, the infant was named Nanak after his elder sister, Bebe Nanaki.¹ How glad must she have been ! Brothers named after them are especially dear to Indian sisters. Nanak was Bebe Nanaki's own 'special' brother. Thus, apparently quite by accident, but probably by a divine pre-ordination, a lasting bond was established between the brother and the sister. He shared her name. We shall see that he came to own her very soul. She alone, of all his family, discerned, at a very early time, the Eternal Light that shone in the countenance of her divine brother.

All who beheld this infant felt drawn towards him. Resting in his cradle, or lying in the loving arms of his kith and kin, the infant would ever smile such a beaming smile that all who saw him felt an unknown joy stealing into their

1. Nanake is a Panjabi word meaning the home of the maternal grand-father or *Nana*. A child born at *nanake* home is usually called Nanak, if male, and Nanaki, if female. Bebe Nanaki had been named in accordance with that custom, having been born in her *nanake* home.

hearts and elating their souls. He never cried but ever smiled and played. When he was able to walk, the same jubilation marked him wherever he went. Soon, another trait of his personality became visible. Whenever a beggar, a needy man, or a *faqir*, called at the door, he would run in, take hold of whatever article of food or clothing he could get at, and, with a beaming, compassionate face, deliver it into the hands of the mendicant. Little did his father relish such unbounded charity but what could he do ?

At an early unripe age of five, he began to talk of divine things. When he was among his playmates, he would, at times, seat them all around himself and bid them repeat after him the name of the Formless Lord. At other times, he would run and jump, frisk and gambol, at the head of his little band. When all alone, he would sometimes sit for hours with half-shut eyes. Those who beheld him thus occupied, were struck at the radiance and glory that emanated from his calm, rosy countenance. But his father liked not these other-worldly signs in his only son. He wanted to see him become a great man of the world.

As stated already, Talwandi was secluded from the outside Muhamadan world. Its founder had, instead of molesting and persecuting the Hindus, like his co-religionists of other places, lived at peace with his neighbours. Hindu *Sadhus* found hospitable shelter in the forests round about Talwandi. After Rai Bhoje, his son, Rai Bular, had followed in the footsteps of his father. On that account, bands of *Sadhus* quite often visited the locality. The child, Guru Nanak, took great pleasure in visiting them. He would sit by them for hours. He would offer them what article of food he could lay his hands on at home. What were his thoughts as he sat there, looking at those whom he was destined to teach a truer renunciation than a mere quitting of the family and living on the labours of others ? Did any of those seekers after Truth and self-realization, those wandering *Sadhus*, ever have a vision of what the child before them was to be one day ?

Mehta Kalu was sorely troubled over the strange ways of Guru Nanak. In spite of the love-inspired efforts of Mata Tripta, the Mehta could not but detect his son's gifts to beggars and *Sadhus*. How could a man, whose heart was after storing wealth and riches in this world, relish such 'wasteful' conduct of his son ? He rebuked the child. The latter promised to obey his father. But what could he do ? Charity, open-handed and large-hearted charity, was in his grain. The Divine urge would not let him be what his father would make

of him. His soul was in constant communion with the Supreme Soul. He could not resist these early calls to a life that was to be his in times to come. The Mehta reproached the astrologer for having predicted a great and glorious future for such an 'idler and spendthrift'. "What a joke!" he would say. "You said that he would be a great ruler over men and lands; he would win untold wealth and honour for himself and his people. Yet, he has begun the other way. He seems bent upon throwing away what little I have honestly gathered. Was it a joke or an error on your part?" The astrologer would not give in. How could he let it be supposed that his science, on which he depended for his sustenance, was false, or that he was not well-versed in it? "Have patience," he would say, "I still hold that Nanak is to be even greater than rulers of men and lands. Judge him not too hastily, nor measure him with your own standards."

CHAPTER 4

TEACHES HIS TEACHERS-I

At last, the fond father, intent on moulding his son after his own heart, decided to send the 'refractory' child to school. "That," thought he, "will at least keep him away from home for the day time, and thus stop his wasteful conduct. He will also have no time to go about hunting after *Sadhus* and *Faqirs* and imbibe their ways. Perhaps, thus weaned from such distractions, he may learn the three R's and qualify himself for stepping into my shoes when I am gone."

Like a dutiful son that he was, Guru Nanak readily agreed to do as bidden. On an 'auspicious' day Mehta Kalu took his son, destined to be a world-teacher, to a *Pandha*, a Brahmin school master. "Take good care of him," said he to the *Pandha*, "for he is rather troublesome !" The *Pandha*, however, discovered no such trait in his new pupil. He found him quick to learn and ready to obey. The *Pandha* felt not a little puzzled over what appeared to him either an unheard of precocity in the child or a most wonderful miracle. All his life he had seen no such pupil. The child learnt to write in an amazingly short time. But a greater wonder was still in store for the school-master. One day, Guru Nanak sat a little apart, apparently engrossed in writing on the wooden tablet (*patti*). The schoolmaster watched him with interest. He had already discovered that his new pupil was no ordinary child. He had seen him at play, leading the whole band. He had often watched him close his eyes and sit for hours as if in ecstasy. He was sure that it was not sleep. He had looked into the mysterious eyes of his strange coach. Sometimes they would shine with unbounded mirth; at others, they seemed to be deep, unfathomable wells at the bottom of which was seen reflected all that agony which afflicted the world. His pupils had also told him, "Whenever you leave the school-room for a while, Nanak gathers us round himself and makes us all repeat after him the name of the Omnipotent, Formless Lord. At such times, his face always appears to be radiant with an unearthly light." The teacher

had heard, seen, and felt all this; so it was with a strange, heart-quivering expectation that he watched Guru Nanak, as he sat apart, calm and concentrated, writing on the *patti* and humming to himself a soft, low tune as he wrote. At last, the watchful eyes of the school master discovered that Guru Nanak had laid aside his pen and was looking at his work in mute joy and admiration. Later, when he was in his full glory as a world-teacher, Guru Nanak revealed the secret of his matchless compositions. It was not he that wrote or composed. He was simply an amanuensis of the Supreme Lord, an organ wherewith the Word of God was proclaimed to humanity. Here was a sample of the first one of such compositions. The great amanuensis sat watching his work in joy and wonder. The school master thought that his pupil, having finished his writing, would come up to him and show it. But Guru Nanak did not move. The *Pandha* waited for him till he could wait no longer. A strange urge was in his heart, the like of it he had never felt before. He rose, went up to where his strange pupil sat, and said, "Nanak, thou hast been writing something. I should like to see it."

Guru Nanak rose at the bidding of the school master and gave the *patti* into his hands. Great, indeed, was the amazement of the *Pandha*. He found that the writing on the *patti* was not what he had expected, or what his pupils generally wrote at that stage of their educational career. Not disconnected, independent words and figures, but sentences and stanzas ! He began to read. He bowed again and again as he read. It was an acrostic on the alphabet. But what an acrostic it was to be written by a child ! 'As in similar compositions in other languages, the letters were taken consecutively, and words whose initials they formed were employed to give metrical expression to the Guru's divine aspirations, his tenets, and admiration of the attributes of the Creator.'¹ The acrostic was a hearty discourse on God, man, and the universe. It contained an essence of the message of hope, joy, and deliverance which the Guru had to proclaim to suffering, despairing, misguided humanity; a burden of the Divine Song with which Guru Nanak had, later, to wean people from their soul-killing habits and inclinations, to lift them up to the level of gods, to the feet of the Lord, A few lines of the acrostic are given below :-

1. Macauliffe, *cit. op.* vol. i, p. 3.

The One Lord who created the universe is the Supreme Lord of all.
 Fortunate and fruitful is the advent of those into the world whose hearts remain
 attached to the service of God.
 Why are you misled on the error's path, O fool ?
 Then alone can't you be deemed a learned man,
 When a good account of your life you can't render to the Lord.
 The Primal Being is the Giver; He alone is True.
 No account shall be due by the pious man who understands the truth through
 these letters.
 Praise Him whose limit cannot be found.
 They alone shall win reward who perform service and practise Truth.
 He alone can be deemed a learned man.
 Who realizes the knowledge of God.
 If the same Lord pervading in all he could see,
 How could man a proud egotist be ?
 All the world is bound in His bonds; no other authority does here prevail.
 The servant who exerts himself diligently,
 Who is ever engaged in executing the Guru's commands,
 Who deems bad and good lot as the same,
 Such a one shall attain union with Him.
 There is only One who takes, One who gives; I have heard of none other.
 Why die of grief and be tortured by regrets, O mortal,
 Ever does He continue to give what He has ordained and had to give.
 He gives, looks after, and issues His orders how living things are to obtain their
 allotted sustenance.
 When I look carefully I see no other than God.
 The One God pervades all places; the One God dwells in the heart.
 Why practise deceit, O mortals ? In a while or two you shall have to leave here.
 Why gamble your life thus idly away ?
 Die to the Lord, at His feet thyself thou lay.
 True comfort fills the hearts of those whose minds are attached to the feet of God.
 Those whose minds are so attached are saved, O Lord, and obtain happiness by
 your favour.
 O mortal, why make such vain display ? All that exists is doomed to vanish.
 Serve Him who pervades all, and you shall obtain happiness.
 He Himself destroys and builds; He acts as He pleases.

He looks after what He creates, issues orders, and saves those on whom He looks with favour.

He alone, in whose heart dwells God does His praises sing.

The Creator blends such a one with Himself, and he enters not the cycle of birth and death again.

The terrible ocean is vast and deep, none has found its end.

We have no raft or boat; we are drowning; save us, O Saviour King,

He who has made all things is in every place.

What is doubt and what is mammon ?

Whatever pleases Him is good.

Impute no blame to others, my soul;

On your *karma* the blame does lie in whole.

As did I sow, so now I reap;

I'd blame none else for this my grief.

If man recognize the True One, he shall never be born again.

The holy man utters, understands, and knows but the One God.

Why quarrel, O mortal ? Meditate on Him whose Will alone prevails in all things.

Meditate on Him; be absorbed in the True One; and be a sacrifice unto Him,

There is no other Giver but He who has created all creatures and sustains them all.

Meditate on God's name, be absorbed in His name, and you shall, night and day, derive profit therefrom.¹

The *Pandha* had heard from Mehta Kalu and his own pupils of the strange ways of his pupil. He had also learnt about the astrologer's prophecy about him. The writing on the wooden tablet confirmed the belief which was then germinating in several pious hearts-namely, that Mehta Kalu's son was destined to be the promised Deliverer. But the *Pandha*, like a worldly man of learning, would not believe without a further test. 'This is all right,' said he to his pupil, 'but what I have to teach is also essential. You are a *Khatris* son. You should also learn accountancy, so that after your father, you may take up his place. That will ensure you honour, riches, and a happy, comfortable life. It will also please your father.'

'That may be true', replied Guru Nanak, 'but what of the life to come ? Will all that you wish to teach help me at the time when an account of this life

1. Guru Nanak, *Asa Patti*.

must needs be rendered ? No, friend, such knowledge of accounts will be of no avail hereafter'. The answer that the Guru gave to these and other questions of the *Pandha* are embodied in a hymn which may be translated as follows :

'Burn your earthly cravings, grind their ashes well,
and make your ink therefrom;
Let a pure, high mind your paper be;
Make divine love your pen and heart your writer;
Then write as a Teacher true does guide you.
Write the Name of God, write His praises,
Write of the Lord that has no limit, end, or measure.
O friend, learn to write this account,
So that when and where an account is called from you,
You may win a mark of honour true.
There, in the life to come, true honour and greatness, everlasting joys,
and eternal delights are attained;
There shall marks of honour and acceptance be on the brows of those
Whose hearts enshrine the Sacred True Name.
Not with idle words but through Grace Divine can such honour be won.
Some come into the world and others depart therefrom,
Yet what high sounding names they give themselves !
Some are beggars born and some have courts both royal and great .
In the life to come full well shall they know
That if their lives here be devoid of the love of God,
All else of no account shall be.
In loving fear of You, my Lord, I do ever dwell,
So does my body pine and waste away;
For, those who were known as lords and kings,
Have I seen get mingled into dust and clay
When a man departs from hence, O Nanak,
All attachments false shall sundered be.'

Sri Rag

The schoolmaster found his Master. He acknowledged that he himself, and not the Divine pupil before him, was in need of instruction. He bowed to Guru Nanak and retired.

Guru Nanak attended school for some days more and then ceased. He had learnt all that the school master could teach him, i.e. arithmetic and book-

keeping, besides reading and writing Devnagri. Again there came over him the same phase, which erstwhile had startled his father. Sometimes he would run and jump, frisk and gambol with children of his age; but more often he would sit at home, lost in profound thought, or would visit *Sadhus* and *Faqirs* in the neighbouring forests, and have talks with them. The father was perturbed again. The family priest and astrologer, Hardial, now advised the Mehta to send his son to a Sanskrit scholar. 'He does not like,' said he, 'to learn accounts and such other things. He has a religious bent of mind. Put him to school with a *Pandit*. Let him learn *Vedas* and *Shastras* and be a scholar of repute.'

This was agreed to. Guru Nanak was taken to a Sanskrit scholar named Brijnath. Here, too, the child was as quick at learning as before. In a short time this pupil, who was to be a World-Teacher, convinced his new school master that he had little need for such scholastic training as the Brahmin scholar could impart. Having learnt from Brijnath as much as he deemed necessary, and having taught him what was most essential for a man of religion, Guru Nanak again took to his former ways; meditations at home and association with *Sadhus* and *Faqirs*, interrupted, now and then, by jubilant, mirthful pranks with his playmates. He would retire to the seclusion of the forests and sit there in complete abandonment. His heart would become one with Nature. Her beauty charmed him. It took his heart captive and for hours at a stretch, he sat with wide open eyes, drinking deep with every pore of his body the joy and harmony of the scene before him. From Nature his heart rose to the feet of the Creator. His eyes would then close. A quiet glory would overspread his countenance. For hours he would sit thus, enjoying the beauties of Nature and an unbroken communion with the Creator of these beauties. At such times his heart was in complete harmony with Nature, and his whole being in tune with the Lord of creation. A supreme, unearthly joy filled his body and soul, as he sat there, watching the play of the Infinite in the finite nature all round him.

At other times he would visit ascetics and anchorites, bands of whom frequented the dense forests around Talwandi 'for the combined objects of undisturbed prayer and escape from the persecution of bigoted Moslem rulers.'¹ He used 'to court the retirement of the forest and the society of the religious men who frequented it. Several of them were profoundly versed in

1. Macauliffe, *cit. op.* vol. i, p. 10.

the Indian religious literature of the age. They had also travelled far and wide within the limits of Hindustan, and met its renowned religious teachers.¹ Guru Nanak thus became acquainted with the latest teachings of Indian philosophers and reformers.¹ He heard their learned discourses on *Vedas* and *Shastras*. But he was there not only to receive. He gave them glimpses of the Infinite Fount of knowledge divine that intuitively flowed into his heart at all times. He learnt from them, no doubt, but he learnt far more from his 'undisturbed communings with nature, with his own soul, and with his Creator. The voice that had spoken to many a seer again became vocal in that wilderness, and raised (Guru) Nanak's thoughts to the summit of religious exaltation. In summer's heart and winter's frost, in the glory of the firmament, in the changeful aspects of nature, as well as in the joys and sorrows of the inhabitants of his little natal village, he read in bright characters and repeated with joyous iteration the name of the Formless Creator. The name henceforth became the object of his continual worship and meditation, and indeed one of the distinctive features of his creed.'²

1. Macauliffe, *cit. op.* vol. i, p.10

2. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHES HIS TEACHERS -II

As was but natural for a man of his views, Mehta Kalu was ill-pleased at the ways of his only son; for he felt that the society of religious men who had renounced the world was not likely to advance his son's secular interests. He wanted his son to be a success in secular worldly life. Hence, when he found his son thus turning a truant, sore indeed was his grief. Something must be done to wean him from his undesirable ways and habits. He consulted Rai Bular. The latter, who had heard of Guru Nanak's devotional temperament and had, therefore, taken a liking to him, sympathized with Mehta Kalu and advised him to have patience. He suggested that Guru Nanak should be set to learn Persian. He promised that if he learnt that language, in which all state documents and accounts were written, he would put him in charge of his office and later, appoint him village accountant in succession to his father.

This was done. Guru Nanak was now sent to a *Mulla* or a Muslim teacher.¹ There, too, he astonished his teacher by the quickness with which he learnt all that the Mulla taught him. But the Mulla, too, soon found that his pupil was greater than he himself. After learning from the teacher as much as pleased his heart, Guru Nanak initiated him into a knowledge of God and made the teacher his pupil. In reply to his teacher's injunctions, he assumed the role of teacher in turn and composed an acrostic on the letters of the Persian alphabet. A few verses from that acrostic are rendered below :-

'Remember God and banish neglect of Him from your heart.

Accursed is the life of him in this world who breathes without uttering the Name.

Renounce heresy and walk according to your religious law.

1. In all *Sakhis* this teacher is mentioned as '*Mulla*'. According to S. Khazan Singh, *Twarikh Khalsa*, and Bhai Kahn Singh, his name was Kutb Din. Macauliffe gives Rukn-ul-Din as the teacher's name, and Cunningham says that the Mulla's name was Sayyid Hussain.

Be humble before everyone, and call no one bad.
 Embrace humility, renounce the pride of your heart;
 Restrain your wandering mind, O Rukn-ul-Din,
 And every moment remember your Creator..
 Traitors they were who forgot their Creator;
 Their minds were bent on hoarding wealth, and they bore loads of sin upon their heads.
 The advantage of faith you shall know when you arrives before God.
 Restrain the five evil passions¹, O Rukh-ul-Din, and apply your heart to God.
 Search your heart; the Lord is in you.
 The body is a vessel which He wrought,
 And into which He infused His workmanship and skill.
 You shall obtain martyrdom if you die for the love of the dear One.
 O Rukn-ul-Din this human body shall go; while in it, pray to obtain God.
 Practise good work to the best of your power;
 Without good works and virtues man shall die full of regret.
 Have done with the world, and think it not thine own;
 If you deem it to belong to God, you shall not be confounded.
 Man's mind is wanton; if you restrain it,
 You shall plant your feet firmly on the way to Truth and Reality.
 Wilfulness is prohibited; walk as your religious guide directs you.
 The wealth of those, says Nanak, who give no alms, shall slip away.
 They on whom He casts His look of mercy, become worthy.
 God is in you; why thinks you not on Him, O ignorant man?
 By service to the Guru, God is found, and deliverance obtained at last.
 Love God whose empire is everlasting.
 He is unrivalled, O Nanak, and in no need of one.²

Having learnt from his Persian teacher as much as deemed necessary ,
 he left his school. 'There are numerous Persian words and some Persian verses
 of the Guru found in the *Granth Sahib*, and it may be accepted as a fact that
 he became a fair Persian scholar. It is probable that his habit of free thought
 and toleration of other men's opinion were assisted by his perusal of the
 Muhammadan writings with which the Persian language abounds,'³

1. Lust, anger, covetousness, worldly love, and pride.
2. Maculiffe, vol.i, p. 15. 'This composition is not found in (*Guru*) *Granth Sahib*s.
Some Sikhs deny that it is the composition of Guru Nanak.'
3. Macauliffe, vol.i, p. 15.

Some people consider the greatness of a great Master, founder of a great religion, to lie in his having been quite or almost illiterate. Or, as Macauliffe puts it, 'The scholastic ignorance of the founders of great religions has been made the subject of many a boast on the part of their followers. The object, of course, is that the acquirements and utterances of the religious teachers may be attributed solely to divine inspiration.' Some devoted and over zealous followers of Guru Nanak, too, have represented him as playing a truant at school and refusing to learn anything from his teachers. This does not seem to be a correct appreciation of his scholastic career. As said above, he learnt from his teachers all that they could teach, and as much as he deemed necessary for his purpose, but he did so in an astonishingly short time. When he grew up, he supplemented his knowledge by associating with the saints and hermits who frequented the forest near his village. According to the author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, Guru Nanak, studied Islamic literature from Sayyad Hassan, a *darvesh*. His sacred compositions, their language, style, and contents, bespeak a vast and varied learning which has seldom been equalled. His scholarly attainments were considerable, as shown by his erudite compositions like the *Japuji*, *Asa-di-Var*, *Siddha Gosht*, and *Onkar*. He often referred to ancient writers and made apt use of classical stories, and had philosophical discussions with learned *Yogis*, *Pandits*, and *Sufis*, whom he was always able to convince by his deep learning and hard common sense. The architectural design of his compositions and his epigrammatic style, close packed with reflective thought on great problems of life, bear ample testimony to his being a scholarly writer.²

Having finished his Persian education, the Guru was once more free to enjoy God and nature. Long and frequent were now his communions with these inexhaustible founts of Infinite joy. But sad, depressing moments intervened between these hours of bliss. The world around him was burning with fires excited by the low, ignoble passions of fallen men. It was groaning under a heavy load of suffering which was increasing day by day, 'How could this plight be ended?' This thought filled him with compassion. He sat sad and mute. Then his compassionate heart would melt in a deep real sympathy for

1. Teja Singh Ganda Singh, pp.2-3.

the down-trodden humanity. Thus swayed by these two opposite moods, Guru Nanak passed his days, pining for the time when he would not only make the whole human race partakers of the boundless joy that filled his heart and soul to the very core, but would also himself share and lighten the burden of grief and suffering of passion and anguish, that was crushing the very life of men. The supreme call of humanity and God was ever ringing in his soul. But the time for response had not yet come.

CHAPTER 6

TENDS HIS FATHER'S CATTLE

Guru Nanak's scholastic career thus came to rather an early end. All the three teachers to whom he had been sent had taught him what and as much as they could, but had, in the end, acknowledged him their teacher. On that account Mehta Kalu was puzzled. His only son had shown aversion to qualifying himself for earning a living. At last he thought within himself, 'Nanak loves to live in the forests. He is fond of solitude. Why not send him to tend cattle ? He will be free to roam and muse, and will also be engaged in some useful work. Perhaps he may take to this sort of work and be able to eke out a living, howsoever humble.'

Guru Nanak was anxious to obey and please his father as far as he could. It was not any lack of such hearty intention that provided his father with food for grief. What prevented him from following his father's behests was beyond his control. It was the strong mysterious urge for the great duty, charged with which he had come into the world, that took him captive in the midst of his secular occupations. It was the vision of the great humane task which awaited him, that made him merge deep in soul-stirring thought. It was the call of the care-laden, suffering humanity that permitted him no leisure for the tasks to which his father would yoke him.

So, when his father told him what his new task was to be, Guru Nanak gladly obeyed. Thus, for a time, the great World teacher, who was to tend and feed with the bread of God the souls of men, and lift and lead them to the Abode of the Infinite Lord, tended his father's cattle. As they grazed in the forest, he would sit or roam as duty would demand or his impulse would dictate. He had ample opportunities of giving rein to his masterpassion. Nature, with all her grandeur and beauty, was now his companion for the whole day. He was happy. Every evening he returned home with a joyous, beaming face. This pleased the heart of Mehta Kalu. His only son, who had played almost a truant at school, was now taking to an occupation which, though not likely to yield honour and riches could yet be honest and profitable.

For some time things went on all right. One day as he sat under a tree, opening out his heart and soul to the Beloved, whom he found pervading the wide stretch of nature before him, his eyes closed. The Great Charmer had entered his heart and locked Himself in. Guru Nank thus became a captive in the lifegiving embrace of his Beloved Lord. He saw nothing, he heard nothing, he thought nothing of the outer world. The cattle grazed as they would. They strayed into a neighbour's field. The owner of the field drove them out and came in great rage to the place where Guru Nank sat in the lap of his Maker. Finding him 'asleep', he began to mutter, 'What a wary herdsman, this ! Himself he sleeps and lets his cattle graze at will and ruin poor people's crops. Little does he realize the grief that grips the hearts of us tillers of the soil when our crops, raised with great toil and labour, are thus ruined by stray cattle. See, how free of care he sleeps ! Get thou up, O sluggard !

As he said this, he held the unique herdsman by the shoulders and shook him with angry force. Guru Nank came to himself. He uttered '*Dhan Nirankar*, O Sublime, Formless Lord !' and opened his eyes. He saw the farmer and heard his remonstrances. With a smile on his lips, he said, 'Let go, my friend. Be not enraged. What if God's dumb creatures have taken a few bites from thy crops ? The Bountiful Lord Who is the Creator and Sustainer not only of thyself and thy fields and crops, but also of these cattle, will bless you with plenty. Let us pray to Him. You will have no cause to grieve.' But the owner of the field was not to be appeased. He took the Divine Child to Rai Bular and told him of what had happened. The by-standers informed the Rai that Mehta Kalu's son was rather insane; hence, there was no good remonstrating with him. So the Mehta was sent for. Rai Bular told him to compensate the farmer for the damage done to his crops. We can imagine what must have passed in the heart of the father. His only son, having proved a 'failure' at school, had now done something worse. He had made him receive a public reproach from his employer. There was also the compensation that had to be paid. The Divine Child read the mind of his father. He addressed Rai Bular and said, 'But before pronouncing judgement, would you not examine the crops which are said to have been damaged ? God is merciful. How could a few bites by His creatures be the cause of injury to a poor man's crops ?' The Rai sent his men. They came running back and said, 'The crop is untouched. It seems

even richer and greener in the place where this man reported the cattle to have caused a damage.'

All were astonished. The Rai, who had already heard of Guru Nanak's budding greatness and of his having taught his teachers, besought the Divine Child to grant him a little light. 'You are surely a *Yogi*', said the Rai, 'an ascetic or a great saint. Give me a little of this great gift.'

Guru Nanak, with half-shut eyes, and in a soft, sweet voice, sang a Divine Song which may be freely translated as under :-

'Let *Jogis* practise *jog*, let gluttons practise gluttony,
Let penitents practise penance, and rub and bathe themselves in holy waters;
But I, O Dear, would listen to your songs, if any one will sit by me and sing them
to me.

Whatever one sows one reaps, whatever one earns one eats;
If one goes from here with the credentials of Name, one will not be called upon to
render accounts.

There a man is judged by the deeds he has done here.
The breath that goes away without the thought of God goes in vain.
Of no worth is this body if it enshrines not the Lord's True Name,
I would sell it away to any one prepared to buy it.'¹

Rai Bular bowed. Others who had the ear to hear the divine message of Guru Nanak also bowed. All went their way. The field which was the cause of all this is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Kiara Sahib* or the Sacred Field. Alas ! It also is now in Pakistan.

1. Guru Nanak, *Rag Suhi*.

CHAPTER 7

THE SACRIFICIAL THREAD

By this time the Guru attained the age of nine years, the age when he must be, according to the custom of his family, invested with *janeu*, or the sacrificial thread of the Hindus. The day was fixed. Mehta Kalu made great preparations for the ceremony of *Yajnopavitam*. He made elaborate arrangements for the entertainment of his guests, relatives, friends, and neighbours whom he invited. There was a great gathering at his house on the appointed day. A woollen carpet was spread on a raised platform. Hardial, the family priest, drew a circle round the carpet and took this seat on it with all the accessories of the ceremony ranged round him.

He then asked Mehta Kalu to bring his son, for whom a seat was provided facing the priest. Guru Nanak came and took his seat, his eyes sparkling with amusement, and a smile playing on his lips.

When all the preliminary rites had been duly performed, Hardial lifted his hand in order to put the sacred thread round Guru Nanak's neck. People were getting ready with words of congratulations which were usually showered on the child's father on such occasions. But a surprise was in store for all of them. With a loving, thoughtful smile, playing on his lips, the Divine Child caught the priest's uplifted hand and asked, 'What are you about, dear *Pandit* ? What good will this thread do me ? What advantage will it confer on me ?' Hardial replied, 'This thread, the *janeu*, is the basis of the Hindu religion. By wearing it thou wilt be admitted to the position of the Twice-born. Without it a man is a *Shudra*. By putting it on, you will obtain honour and greatness in this world and happiness in the next. So come, let me put it round your neck.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Guru Nanak. 'I don't quite understand what you say. This thread is either bought ready made for a pice or thread is spun out of cotton and twisted by a Brahmin. Then comes the ceremony of *Yajnopavitam*. A goat is killed, cooked, and eaten. Then everybody present

says, "Put on the thread." The man is thus invested with the *janeu*. What then ? The thread may break, become soiled, get burnt, or be lost. Then he has to put on a new one. When the man dies, the thread remains with the body. It does not accompany man or his soul in the journey after death. There everybody goes threadless. I should like to have one that does not break, or get soiled, or be burnt, or be lost. Such a thread will be for the soul, and right glad shall I be to put it on. If you have it, come, put it round my neck by all means.'

'But,' replied Hardial, 'the great holy *Rishis* of old, who had a true knowledge of God as well as of the needs of the soul in its journey to Him, have ordained the wearing of this triple thread for the twice-born Hindus. They believed that it would help the wearer both in this life and the next. Moreover, if this thread will not satisfy you, what sort of thread would you have ? Whence has it to be had ?'

'That I can tell thee', replied the Divine Child. 'The lasting sacred thread for the soul should be made from a realization in practical life of noble, lofty ideals of true religion and morality. Let mercy be the cotton, contentment the thread, purity the knots, and truth the needed twist. Blend these virtues together in thy every-day life. Thereby thy soul will be invested with a thread that will never get old or dirty, burnt or lost, and which will never break. A man who has such a thread round his neck is truly blessed. He needs no other thread. So, not this thread for me which can be had from the bazar so cheap, which gets old, dirty, and broken, and cannot accompany me when I go hence.'

Hardial felt his wisdom and learning failing him. To be thus put out by a child in the presence of that big gathering was too much for him. He had hoped that Guru Nanak would be a great apostle of the decaying Hindu religion. But here was a rude shock for him. Nanak had refused to respect the Hindu initiation ceremony. So he mustered courage and said, 'Dear child, we must respect the custom initiated by the great *Rishis*. A Hindu without this thread is a man without a religion. I am sure you are to be a man of religion. So put on the thread.'

'What religion does thy thread give to the wearer ? Around me I see that men who pride themselves on being Twice-born, and round whose necks this cotton thread has been put by learned Brahmins, are committing the

foulest deeds. They rob and kill, lie and deceive, give reins to their lust and greed, and commit a thousand sins and crimes against their fellow-creatures. Their souls are polluted to the core. Is this the religion which thy thread has given them ? When a religion ! I would have none of it.'

The Guru said all this in form of *Sloks* which were later included in his composition called *Asa di Var*. They may be rendered as below :-

'Make mercy your cotton, contentment your thread, continence its knot, and truth its twist.

That would make a *janeu* (sacred thread) for the soul; if thou have it, O *Brahmin*, then put it on me.

It will not break. or get soiled or be burnt or be lost.

Blessed is the man, O Nanak, who goes with such a thread on his neck.'

'You purchases a thread for a pice and, seated in a specially outlined square, you puts it on.

You whisper instruction in the ear that *Brahmin* has become the *guru* of the wearer.

Man dies, the thread falls off, and he goes away threadless.'

'Though men commit countless thefts, countless adulteries, utter countless falsehoods and countless words of abuse;

Though they commit countless robberies and villainies night and day against their fellow creatures;

Yet the thread is spun from cotton and the *Brahmin* comes to twist it;

For the ceremony a goat is killed, cooked, and eaten, and everybody present says:

"Put on the sacred thread."

When it becomes old, it is thrown away, and another is put on.

Nanak, the thread would not break if there were strength in it.'

'True,' replied the *Brahmin*, 'people have fallen in character. This thread used to be the mark of a lofty religious life. This it has ceased to be to a great extent. Still, the remedy lies not in discarding the ancient custom, but in reforming men's character. So come, please. Don't shake your head. Do you think that all the *Rishis* of old, and all your Sires besides, have been mere fools ? If this thread does not please you, what sort of thread would you have ?'

'I have told you that already. The true thread is to be had by the acquisition and practice to noble qualities by praising God and by leading a life of ever constant, unbroken consciousness of His presence in and around us

everywhere. By realizing the Will of the Supreme Lord in his daily life does a man obtain a thread on which he can rely with confidence. The thread thus obtained will be truly the thread for the soul. It will never get old or fall away. It will take him into the presence of the Blissful Lord and win for him a place of honour in His court. Such a thread would I gladly wear.

‘By adoring and practising God’s Name honour and a true thread are obtained.

In this way a sacred thread shall be put on, which will not break, and which will be fit for entrance into God’s court.’

The Brahmin could argue no longer. So he said, ‘What you have said is all true. We are truly without a true thread of the soul; we would wear that too. But you are without a thread of the body. Put it on now, and then we all can strive to have a thread for the soul, too.’

‘Are you sure.’ said the Divine Child, ‘that even your bodies have the needed string ? I find none anywhere. There is no string to bind the sexual organs and to restrain them from lust and vice; there is no string to hands and feet which could keep them away from evil-doing; there is no string for the tongue, nor one for the eyes which would keep them away from sensual, sinful pleasures. Yes, the whole body has no string. Nay, the whole community goes about threadless. Mark the consequent degradation all round. How high you hold your head in pride of your high caste ! The thread has verily proved a curse for the community. Having engendered caste pride, it has broken asunder all ties of union, and chains are now round your necks. All this, because you wear not the true thread. Yet you would spin threads of cotton and assembling all in one place, enjoy a feast, and put threads, false and now positively harmful, round the necks of others. What a huge joke ! And what an unheard of wonder ! People who are blind in the soul pose as seers and come audaciously forward to guide others over paths which they themselves cannot see. I, for one, will not follow such a guide.’

This reply of the Guru was in the form of a *Sloka* which may be rendered as follows :-

‘There is no string to bind the sexual organs and no string for women,
There is no string for the impure acts which cause your brear to be daily spat on;
There is no string for the feet, there is no string for the hands;
There is no string for the tongue and none for the eyes;
The Brahmin himself goes about without strings,
Yet he twists strings for others and puts them round their necks !

He performs marriages for hire;
 He takes out his scroll to show the wedded ones their future;
 Hear and see ye people, the wonder of it-
 He is blind in the soul and yet he calls himself a wise one.'

Hardial was rendered speechless. All present felt how true was all that the Divine Child had said. His analysis of the fall of the Hindu community and the advent of tyranny and political subjection was felt to be right. The Brahmin and others, who had come to invest the Divine Child with the sacred thread, realized that they themselves were threadless. Hardial bowed to the child and said, 'True, child, our community had fallen very low. There is no help. Each of us should try to save his soul. Who is there to take up the risky, arduous task of uplifting a downtrodden, subject race ?'

Guru Nanak's eyes flashed with a heavenly lustre and, in the next instant, were softly closed. He took a deep breath and sang, 'When the Lord in His mercy sends Grace to a man, He puts him to the task that He would get performed. It is not for us to choose. That servant and that alone can serve the Lord whom He chooses to follow His commands and to carry out His Will by obeying His behests, by carrying out His Will, the servant will win His satisfaction and get a place of honour in the Lord's palace. If he does what pleases his Lord, he will certainly obtain all that in his heart he may wish or desire. He would become acceptable to the Father above and, having performed his allotted task in the world, would enter the court divine arrayed in honour.' The *Pauri* or stanza embodying this may be rendered as below :-

'When God in His mercy sendeth Grace to man, He putteth him to His work.
 That worker would serve the Lord in whom He chooses to realize His Will.
 If he carries out His Will to His satisfaction, he shall get a place in his Master's place.
 If he does what pleases his Master, he shall attain his heart-desired wish,
 And enter the court divine arrayed in honour.'

The Brahmin and the rest had to go away, musing within themselves on the 'miracle' which they had witnessed, and on the God-inspired words of Guru Nanak.

CHAPTER 8

HIS UNIQUE SECULAR OCCUPATIONS

For some time more the Divine Child continued tending his father's cattle as best as he could. He wanted to be a dutiful son and to obey his earthly father. But there was the heavenly Father, too, who was ever beckoning him to undertake the great task for which He had sent him into the world. This call of the Bewitching Lord came uncalled and at odd moments. When it came, the Divine Child was gripped like a captive. And the cattle ? Well, they grazed where they liked, tended by gods and angels, as the Divine Child sat in the lap of his Father. This communion with the Blissful Lord affected the child's visible life. His heart and soul gushed with a strange, abiding joy. He would sing his Master's glory in verses whose appeal went straight to the core of the hearer's heart. He held discourses with all who would. To all he appeared to be an active lad with a religious bent of mind.

As he sat in the forest, one day, the Divine fingers invisibly touched the strings of his heart; a delicious, inaudible melody broke forth, filled his whole being, and lifted and bound him to the Lotus feet of the Bewitching Lord. For long did he remain in that posture. Then he lay down to rest. The day passed on, the sun descended well to the west. The shadows of trees veered round to the east. But the sun's rays touched not the body of the Divine youth as he lay there in their path. Something invisible had intervened between him and the sun. It seemed that the shadow of the tree had remained stationary.¹ Rai Bular, passing by in the afternoon, witnessed this 'miracle'. On another occasion, while the cattle grazed in the forest tended by gods and angels, Guru

1. This incident is given in all accounts of the Guru's life. As for its being against the 'laws of Nature', the reader is invited to turn to Appendix B and study the question in the light of observations made there. Modern psychical and spiritual research carried on by some of the most prominent scientists of the world has shown that even more wonderful and seemingly impossible things than the one narrated above do truly happen and defy all known laws of Nature.

Nanak lay down under a tree. After some time, through a space among the leaves and branches, the sun's rays began to fall on his face. A big white cobra came out from its hole, spread its wide hood, and protected his face against the sun. By a strange coincidence, Rai Bular passed again that way. As he beheld the cobra with the large out-stretched hood, his heart was filled with fear lest the youthful saint should be bitten. But, as he hastily approached the place, the cobra smoothly crept away. Guru Nanak awoke. Rai Bular was standing mute in wonder. He had heard much about Mehta Kalu's son, but now he had seen far more. He found that the whole Nature, animate and inanimate, loved the divine youth and did him service and homage. And it could not have been otherwise. He beheld the Creator ever indwelling in all His creation. He was one with Nature and her indwelling Lord. How could Nature let a part and parcel of herself, and a dear one of her Lord, be exposed to uncomfortable heat ? The all-embracing love that ever flowed from his heart had charmed the cobra out of its hole and made it shield him with its hood. He had given himself up wholly to the Lord of the universe and, by the His Will, the whole universe was now at his service.¹

Rai Bular's heart was won. He hugged the youthful saint to his bosom. A sweet, abiding peace and joy filled his heart. He took the youth with him to Mehta Kalu and congratulated him on having such a one as his son. He advised him not to reproach the youth for his indifference to worldly affairs. He was a great man, gifted with unusual qualities and powers. 'A jal-tree, gnarled and maimed by the centuries, is still pointed out as the scene of the former miracle. It possesses a thick trunk, is still gratefully umbrageous, and its venerable branches depend to the earth in a fashion that suggests the pillared shade of the Indian fig-tree.'²

Days passed on, Guru Nanak gave up tending cattle. A strange passive mood overcame him. He would either sit alone all day in the forest, seek out *Sadhus* and have discussions with them, or lie at home, apparently in dejected spirits. For days he would eat nothing. Sometimes he would sing his matchless Divine Songs, at others she would shed tears of joy and

1. Compare Sheikh Farid's *Sloka* wherein God is represented as saying to His devotee, 'If thou becomest mine altogether, the whole universe shall become thine.'

2. Macauliffe, vol.i, p. 19.

sorrow. People said that his insanity had now become fully developed. Others, more religious minded, said that this heart had become completely estranged from the world. He would soon renounce his home and be a full-fledged recluse. His mother reproached him with his idleness. She counselled him to rise, work for his livelihood, and cease weaving impractical discourses. She told him that people thought him to be mad and she advised him so to behave as to prove them wrong. But he paid no heed to her admonition.

When his mother failed in her attempt to lead her son to secular duty, his father addressed himself to the task. He sought the assistance of his brother, Lalu and the Bhatti landlord, Rai Bular, to persuade Guru Nanak to take to some occupation to earn his livelihood. Kalu suggested to him that he was of an age to turn his attention to agriculture and to assist him in the cultivation of his lands. Guru Nanak replied that he was already engaged in that occupation as a tenant of God and was sowing His fields. When asked to explain, he said, 'Here is my prescription for this undertaking:-

'Make your body the field, good works the seed, irrigate with God's Name;
Make your heart the cultivator; God will germinate in thy heart, and you shall
obtain the dignity of *nirvan*.'

Sri Rag

After a pause, he said again,

'Make your mind the ploughman, good acts the cultivation, modesty the irrigating
water, and your body the field to till;

Make Name the seed, contentment the harrow, and the garb of humility the fence
to protect the field;

By the work of Love the seed will germinate; you may behold happy the homes
of persons who act in this way.

O father, mammon accompanies not man when he departs: this mammon has
allured the world, and rare there are who understand it.'

On hearing this, Mehta Kalu and his companions advised him to keep a shop, for shop-keeping was quite a profitable occupation. The Guru replied that the sort of shop that he liked to keep was of the following type :-

'Make the knowledge that life is frail your shop, the true Name your
stock-in-trade;

Make meditation and contemplation your piles of vessels in which to keep your goods; put the true Name into them.

Deal with the dealers of the true Name and you shall reap and gladly take home your profits.'

Then Mehta Kalu suggested that he should become a trader. Thereupon the Guru replied :-

'Make your hearing of the sacred books your merchandise, and truth the horses to carry those goods;

Tie up virtues as your travelling expenses, and think not in your heart of the morrow.

When you arrives in the land of God, you shall obtain happiness in His abode.'

Kalu was now in despair, but he persisted in pressing on his son the need of doing something to earn a living. He said, 'If you are averse to taking to business, then you should take up government service.' Upon this the Guru replied :-

'I serve my Master; you too should serve Him with your whole heart,

Perform action with His Name in your heart;

Make the restraint of evil passions your effort;

So men shall congratulate you.

God will then look on you, O Nanak, with an eye of favour,

Thy face will shine with fourfold splendour,

And you shall be greatly blessed.'

Mehta Kalu and his companions gave up arguing with the Guru and went away. But his mother decided to make another attempt for his worldly reformation. So she said that to disprove that people's talk of his having become insane, he should give up, for a few days, his religious preoccupation and take to some work. To this he replied :-

'I live when I repeat His Name; I die if I forget Him.

It is difficult, indeed, to repeat the true Name.

If a man hunger after the true Name.

His pain shall depart when he satisfieth that hunger.

O mother, how can I forget Him ?

He is the true Lord by virtue of His true Name or qualities.

Many have exhausted themselves in attempts to appraise even an iota of His greatness.

They have failed to evaluate it.
If all men were to join and try to describe Him,
That would not add to or detract from His greatness.
God dies not, neither is there any mourning for Him;
He continues to give us our daily bread which never fails.
His greatness is this that there neither is,
Nor was, nor shall ever be any one like unto Him.
As great as Thou art Thyself, O God, so great is Your gift.
You who made the day made also the night.
They who forget the Lord are indeed low-caste;
Nanak, without the Name they have to be considered low born.
His mother sighed and went away.

CHAPTER 9

HEALS THE PHYSICIAN

For some days at a stretch Guru Nanak kept indoors. His mind was so fixed on God that he would do nothing but sing His praises, repeat His Name, or meditate on Him. He spoke with none. He ate or drank nothing. His people thought that something was wrong with his system. A physician named Hardial was sent for. As he held Guru Nanak's wrist to feel the pulse, the latter smiled a winsome smile, withdrew his arm, and said, "What are you about, my friend?" The physician replied that, by feeling his pulse, he was going to diagnose his trouble. He would then prescribe a suitable remedy. The smile on the lips of the divine child waxed more bright. In a sweet, melodious voice he sang :-

'The physician hath been called to prescribe a remedy; he holds my arm to feel my pulse.

The simple physician does not know that the pain really is in my heart and mind. Physician, go your way, take not my curse with you.

I am imbued with my Lord;

To whom would you administer medicine ?

When there is pain, the physician stands by with a store of medicine;

My body groans because my soul is crying;

Physician give none of your medicines;

Physician, go home; few know my malady;

The Creator Himself, Who has given me this pain, will remove it,

When it pleases Him to do so'¹

The physician, thereupon, said, 'If you think I am incompetent to diagnose your ailment, then describe the symptoms of your trouble. I shall then choose and prescribe a suitable medicine.'

1. The first two lines are found in *Guru Granth Sahib* in *Var Malar*. The others are not found there and are not *Gurbani*.

The Guru replied,

'First of all there is the pain of separation from God; then there is the pang of hunger for contemplation on Him.

I also fear the pain which Death's powerful messengers may inflict.

I feel pain that my body shall one day perish by disease.

O ignorant physician, give me no medicine.

Such medicine as you have, my friend, removes not

The pain I feel nor the continued suffering of my body.

When man forgets God and indulges in sensual pleasures,

Then illness befalls his body.

The wicked heart is thus punished.

O ignorant physician, give me no medicine.

As sandal is useful so long as it exhales perfume,

So man is useful so long as he has breath in his body.

When the breath departs, the body crumbles away and becomes useless;

No one takes medicine after that,

The body becomes bright like gold and the soul is made pure,

Provided the essence of the pure Name is enshrined in it,

Then shall all pain and disease depart,

And the person shall be saved, Nanak, by the true Name.'

Rag Malar

In this hymn the Guru emphasizes the truth that most of the ailments which afflict man's body are born of wrong ways of living and wrong attitude towards the things of this world; that the diagnosis and cure of bodily disorders are neither so difficult nor so important as the diagnosis and cure of the disorders of the mind or the inner self; the right cure of ailments lies in healing the mind and spirit which control the bodily conditions; and the best thing for that purpose is to steep them in Name, to link them with God, to turn them God-wards, towards the unfailing, inexhaustible, and ever available source and reservoir of health, strength, and happiness. When the mind, spirit, inner-self, or the soul becomes pure and healthy, the body becomes pure and good as gold Name is the cure for all diseases.

The following hymn, too, was composed by the Guru on the same occasion for the physician's edification and for a further elucidation of his view

that Name could act as an unfailing cure of all ailments:-

'Pain is arsenic which can be turned into an antidote by treating it with Name.
 In order to pound it, make content the stone or mortar and charity the pestle;
 If you take this antidote every day, your body shall not crumble and, when the end
 comes, it will even kill Death on the spot.
 O ignorant man, take such a medicine
 As shall cure you of all your sins.
 Dominions, wealth, and youth are all shadows, not substantial things,
 Their real worth and nature become clear when the sun's chariot ascendeth forth.¹
 Neither body, nor name or fame, nor caste is of any worth in the world beyond;
 For there it is all day, whereas here it is all night.
 Make tastes or enjoyments thy firewood, cravings or coveteousness thy clarified
 butter and oil;
 Burn them with the fire of lust and wrath.
 Of burnt offerings, sacred feasts, and the reading of the *Puranas*,
 Only those are acceptable or approvable that are pleasing to God.
 Let penitence or disciplined life be the paper, and Your Name, O Lord, the pre-
 scription written thereon.
 They, for whom this priceless medicine is prescribed,
 Are seen to be lucky and rich when they reach their final Home.
 O Nanak, blessed are the mothers who bore them.'

Rag Malar.

Bhasms and *kushṭas* are prepared to serve as sovereign remedies for pains and ailments. The Guru considers Name to be the medicine of all medicines. Virtues like contentment and charity are to serve as precautionary measures in the treatment by that elixir. People usually perform *havan-yagnas* for getting deliverance from pains and afflictions. The Guru tells us of a unique *havan-yagna* in place of the usual one. In it enjoyments or tastes are to serve as firewood, cravings are to be the clarified butter and oil, and lust and wrath are to serve as fire. All these things taken together are to be burnt in this

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1. That is, as in the dark we cannot discern things properly and are subject to illusions, but when the sun rises, we learn their true nature, similarly, the worldly possessions like power and wealth, which, though unsubstantial and transitory like shadows, delude as with their apparent substantiality and durability, when we are engulfed in the darkness of ignorance, are seen in their true nature or perspective when the light of divine knowledge illumines our minds.

yagna. By doing this, one gets the same merit or fruit as from a *yagna* or from a reading of the *Puranas*. Then man becomes totally subservient to His Will. Whatever pleases Him is acceptable to Him.

The physician acknowledged the truth of what the Guru had said and admitted that there was nothing wrong with the latter in the matter of health. Nay, he was convinced that the Guru was destined to be a healer of the sundry ailments afflicting humanity, but now he took up another aspect of the Guru's conduct and manner of life. He asked the Guru to think of the pain and worry which he was causing to his parents and other relatives by his strange ways, and appealed to him so to mend his day-to-day life as to assuage their pain and worry. 'After all,' added he, 'you owe some duty to them and they have some just and ample claims on you. You should be a dutiful son.' In reply the Guru uttered the following hymn in *Rag Gauri Cheti* :

'Since when have I a mother ? Since when a father ?

Whence have we come ?

Out of the fire of the mother's womb and a water-bubble of the father's sperm are we sprung :

For what purpose were we created ?

My Lord, who knows your merit ?

My demerits are beyond count.

Numerous are the forms that we have assumed—those of shrubs, trees, and animals, And those of species of reptiles and winged birds.

A man breaketh shops and strong houses in cities and, committing theft there, goes homewards.

He looks before, he looks being, but how and where can he hide himself from You ?

The banks of streams of pilgrimage, the nine regions of the earth, shops, cities, and market places have I seen.

This trader (man) who has been dragged and pushed through numberless lives, now maketh a bold attempt to measure the infinitude of the Infinite Lord.

My sins are as innumerable as the drops of water in the oceans and the seas.

Be compassionate, extend a little mercy; save me who am like a sinking stone.

My soul burns like fire; my interior is being cut as though with a knife.

Nanak prays, he who realizeth God's Will attain eternal happiness and peace.'

In this hymn the Guru emphasized the truth that before assuming his present birth and life, a man passed through numerous births, lives and deaths. In each life he had his parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives. With the end of one life, the relatives pertaining to that life were given up for ever, and new ones were adopted in the succeeding life. Hence the parents of this life are not to be man's permanent or eternal relations. They will not accompany him in the lives to come. But the soul or spirit of man remains the same all along, and its interests have to take precedence over those of the people, associated with the embodied soul at any stage. Hence parents should not monopolize man's attentions; he should look to the progress of his soul towards its final goal, which is eternal union with the Lord.

As the Guru said all this, he fixed his loving, penetrating look into the eyes of the physician. A quiver went through the latter's body. He felt that he and not Guru Nanak, was in need of a remedy. And he had got it. That look and those words had done their work. The physician was healed by the patient. He bowed and went away in silence, musing over the words of the strange youth. He was convinced that the divine youth, for whom he had come to prescribe, would heal and render whole the ailing bodies, the aching lacerated hearts, and the afflicted souls of his fellowmen. Before going, he said to Mehta Kalu, "Cheer up, good Sir, your son is a great one. He is not ill. He needs no healing. He has come to heal mankind."

CHAPTER 10

THE GOOD BARGAIN

For three months Guru Nanak remained in a passive, listless mood. He ate very little, he spoke very little, and he moved very little. His parents were naturally worried about their only son whom *Pandits* and *Mullas* had failed to teach, whom the physician had failed to heal, but in whom all had discovered signs of some mysterious greatness of which, his parents had no inkling. They were helpless, however. They sighed and kept quiet.

The phase then ended. Guru Nanak, who was a lad of about fourteen now, threw aside the lethargy which had, to all appearances, possessed him for over three months. He began to move about, to associate and talk with youths of his own age, and to eat and drink as an ordinary healthy man. His parents were glad. They thought that their son had recovered from the mysterious illness which had laid him low for three long months.

Mehta Kalu now thought that it was time to make his son engage in some trade or business. So he called Guru Nanak into his presence and said: 'Son, it is time that you should learn to earn a living. You have proved a failure at school and also as a herdsman. What will you do ? You are no child now. We hope to see you married in the near future. Unless you learn a profitable trade, how will you support your family and your parents, who are getting old? I have thought of a plan. I shall give you a small sum. With that you should make a good, profitable bargain, I would suggest that, to begin with, you should purchase from near-about articles that can be sold at a profit here. When, after a few trips, you get experienced, and also lay by a little capital, you can go farther abroad and engage in greater bargains. How do you like the proposal ?'

Guru Nanak replied, "Father, I long to obey and please you. If I fail, it is not for lack of effort or intention. Some mysterious force takes hold of me."

So Guru Nanak was given a sum of twenty rupees and told to make a good bargain with it. Bala, a trusted servant of the Mehta, accompanied him.

The two started towards Chuharkana, a village about twelve miles from Talwandi. The Guru, however, left the public road and took a short cut through uninhabited and unfrequented parts. As they wended their way, they noticed a cluster of trees. The same mysterious power which swayed his body and soul was now directing his steps. He was going to make a mighty good bargain. Bala followed him. In that cluster of trees they found a company of *Sadhus*. These men of religion had no covering for their bodies except the loin-cloths. They were all engaged in diverse forms of penance. Their bodies were weak and lean. Guru Nanak approached one of them and began to talk with him. He learnt that the *Sadhus* had no food for the last several days. Their vows forbade them to go and beg for food. They were given to roaming about and halting in secluded places, away from the haunts of men. In their too great concern for their souls, they were altogether neglecting their bodies. For physical sustenance they relied on God. They were content to eat when and whatever He was pleased to send. The Divine youth was deeply impressed by their faith and trust in God. The pangs of hunger which they must have borne for several days, made a powerful appeal to his heart. He felt the money in his pocket. Here were men of God in great need of food. How could he pass by them unconcerned with a sum in his pocket which could satisfy their want ? His compassionate heart urged him to decide and act at once. Could there be a better, a more profitable, bargain than that of feeling such holy hungry men of God ? He took the money from his pocket and placed it before the chief *Sadhu*. The latter declined to touch it. 'You are a young lad yet,' said the *Sadhu*. 'Perhaps your parents may not like this act of yours, and you may have to suffer in consequence. You need not worry about us. God, whom we seek and serve, and in whom we trust, will send us food when it pleases Him. We can wait till then.'

'Don't mind what happens to me,' said Guru Nanak. 'I shall bear it. The body has to be ruled by the soul and not the soul by the body. My soul is touched at the sight of your sufferings, voluntary as they are. I can't go away without doing what I can to allay them. God seems to have sent me hither for this very purpose.'

The *Sadhu*, thereupon, told the Divine youth that money was of no use to them. They would not touch it. He should, if he was so inclined, bring them

articles of food. So Guru Nanak and his companion went and purchased as much provisions as could be had for the sum, and took them to the ascetics. They broke their several days' fast and blessed the youth whom God had sent to feed them. The place where the hungry mouths were fed by Guru Nanak is the site of a Gurdwara called the *Sachcha (Khara) Sauda* or the Good Bargain. It is now in Pakistan, alas !

Having invested his capital in a bargain, which to him appeared to be the best and most profitable, Guru Nanak retraced his steps towards Talwandi. His whole being was elated with joy and satisfaction. He had fed the hungry and done his duty by man and God. As the two approached Talwandi, Guru Nanak's thoughts reverted to his father. 'He sent me to make a good bargain. I have obeyed his instructions, which were to spend his money to the best advantage. But he will not understand this. He will think that I have thrown away his money. He will be angry. Why not keep away from his wrath for a time so that it may cool a bit ?' So he sent Bala to the village but himself he stayed out. He sat concealed under a tree and passed the night there.¹ In the morning Mehta Kalu came to know of Bala's return. He was naturally perplexed at the non-appearance of his own son. He guessed what it meant. Summoning Bala into his presence, he enquired about his son. Bala told him the whole story and added, 'I pleaded with him, but he would not listen. He said that he was obeying you. When, last evening, we came near the village, he hid himself under a tree near the tank, as perhaps he had begun to fear your anger. I did my duty and am not to blame.'

Mehta Kalu's anger knew no bounds. He told Bala to lead him to the place where Guru Nanak was. Bala led him to the spot where he had left the Guru. They found him seated calmly under the branches of the tree, lost in meditation. Mehta Kalu dragged him from under the hanging branches and said angrily, 'What are you doing here, you sluggard ? What have you done with the money ?' The Guru opened his eyes and looked his father full in the face, but said nothing. Mehta Kalu grew still more angry and began to slap him, right and left, till his cheeks were black and blue with the beating. Thus did the Master suffer for having taken pity on his fellowmen. He bore the

1. The tree is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Tambu Sahib* or the Sacred Tent.

slaps of his fond, worldly-minded father with an unruffled quiet, offering each cheek in turn to receive the fast-falling blows. He showed no resentment, he offered no resistance, he evaded no slap. Without a murmur, he let his body bear the consequences of the noble act performed in obedience to its Master, the soul. Bebe Nanki had followed her father. She was soon at the spot. She came in between the son and the father. She thus rescued her brother from the beating.

Rai Bular heard of this incident. He had already become an ardent admirer and true disciple of the Master. When he heard that the Divine youth had been beaten black and blue by Mehta Kalu, very sad was he. He sent for the Mehta and his son and said, 'What have you done ? Why did you beat this holy one ? And what a beating ! Look at his cheek where your hands have played havoc ! Didn't I tell you never to ill-treat this great person ? You always think of him as your son. You fail to understand him. Was it for twenty rupees that your ire was so excited ? You could have double that sum from me. You shouldn't have beaten your only son for that. What a father you have proved ! I tell you that he is not meant for gaining this world, his gains are of heaven. Don't grow angry with him, but let him have his own way, for his way is the right way.'

Mehta Kalu felt that all present were wrongly accusing him of greed and hard heartedness. He had to defend and justify himself. So he said, 'Rai Sahib, it does not become me to gainsay what you say. But put yourself in my place and see how painful it is. He is my only son; hence my sorrow at his foolish conduct is all the greater. He has proved a failure at school. He was too idle to be a good herdsman. He paid no heed to agriculture or any other pursuit, though many were suggested to him. He gives away my humble earnings to idlers and beggars. He is of age to look about for some means of livelihood. I sent him to earn something by making a good, profitable bargain. And what has he done ? He has thrown away my hard-earned money. The sum is not very big, no doubt. But this had shown me which way the wind blows. He will waste all that I have earned or shall earn. This thought allows me no rest. It made me angry. As his father, it was my duty to correct him. So I gave him a few slaps. He will behave better in future. Yet you reproach me for having done my duty by him. You may, sir, but you should rather pity me.'

Rai Bular answered, short sighted Kalu, when will your eyes begin to see? He is not an ordinary person to behave like ordinary people. He has great things to do. He has not disobeyed you even. He has carried out your order to the letter. You sent him to make a good and profitable bargain. That he did. What better bargain could there be ? I shall pay you the sum so well invested by him. I wish I could take him to my house and be a slave unto him. But the prevalent usage forbids it. People will talk. Take heed, Mehta, if you ill-treat him again, I shall devise some means to get him away from you. I shall make good all the loss that his actions cause to you.'

The incredulous Mehta was astonished at what seemed to him the simplicity of Rai Bular. But to dispute the point further would have been injudicious. He kept quiet and went away. For some days all went well. The divine youth was allowed to live as he pleased. He, too, did nothing that could excite the Mehta's anger. But how long could that be ? How long could the Divine call be silenced or put down ? How could the ever-tuned harp of his godly, human, sensitive heart be made dull and irresponsible to the divine melody and the still, sad music of humanity which, for him, surcharged the very air that he breathed ? Some time after, as he was returning home after a bath, he met with a mendicant who begged alms from him in the name of God. An appeal made in the name of Lord by a poor, homeless man was too strong for him to resist. He gave the begger a drinking vessel of brass which he had in his hand and a ring of gold which was on his finger. Mehta Kalu came to know of it. He was exasperated. He bade his son either to mend his ways or leave his house.

Rai Bular was by now a disciple-in-spirit of Guru Nanak. He heard of the fresh estrangement between the father and the son. It made him sad. It set him thinking how best to put an end to these vexatious family quarrels, how best to secure for the Guru a life where he could freely follow the dictates of his heart and soul. He was convinced that as long as Guru Nanak lived with his well-meaning but worldly-wise father, there could be no end to such troubles. It was necessary that Guru Nanak should go somewhere else.

The Rai was thus on the look-out for a suitable place where he could persuade his Master to go, when an event occurred which promised to solve the problem.

At that time and upto the period of British occupation, land revenue was collected in kind. Surveyors and appraisers called *Amils* were appointed

for appraising revenue demands from various divisions of the land. The Jalandhar Doab was then governed by Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi, a relative of the Lodhi Emperor of Delhi. He had his capital at Sultanpur Lodhi, now a Tehsil of Kapurthala district. One of his *Amils*, named Diwan Jai Ram, was assigned the work of appraising the revenue demand of Talwandi Rai Bho. In that capacity he had to visit that place every year. It was but natural that he should have come in close contact with Mehta Kalu, the village accountant of Rai Bular. Intimacy grew between the two. In course of time, through the mediation of Rai Bular, Guru Nanak's sister, Bebe Nanaki, was married to Diwan Jai Ram.

During his yearly visits to Talwandi he had had ample opportunities of cultivating Guru Nanak's acquaintance and appreciating his good qualities. When he visited Talwandi at the close of the spring harvest of the year in which occurred the events, we have narrated above, he heard the bitter complaints of his father-in-law against the idle, squandering habits of Guru Nanak. He heard of the sort of life that Guru Nanak then lived and the great respect in which he was held by many people of the village. He also met Rai Bular, who complained of the ill-treatment which Guru Nanak got from his father. They put their heads together and decided that Diwan Jai Ram should find a job for Guru Nanak at Sultanpur and then send for him there. Mehta Kalu gladly agreed. Guru Nanak gave his consent to go when called.

CHAPTER 11

LIFE AT SULTANPUR

Diwan Jai Ram soon succeeded in his mission. So he wrote the promised letter, inviting the Guru to Sultanpur. Guru Nanak took leave of his parents and friends and started towards the city of his sister. 'When he asked for Rai Bular's permission to depart, the Rai gave him a banquet. The Rai then requested him to give him any order he pleased, that is, to state what favour he might grant him. (Guru) Nanak replied :-

"I give you one order if you will comply with it.

When your own might avails not, clasp your hands and worship God."¹

This happened towards the end of 1484 A.D. A few days after his arrival at Sultanpur, Diwan Jai Ram took him to the Governor Daulat Khan and introduced him as an educated man. Daulat Khan was pleased at the learning, manner, and bearing of the youth. He gave him a dress of honour in token of having engaged him in his service and put him in charge of his *Modikhana* or the State Granary.² Guru Nanak applied himself to his new duties in right good earnest. They were admirably suited to the inclinations of his temperament. He had to deal out provisions. He had ample opportunities of satisfying his master passion, that of open-handed charity. But he was careful not to give away more than what his own pay and allowance could meet. His scrupulously honest, amiable, and straightforward dealings

1. Macauliffe vol. I, pp. 32-33.

2. As said already, at that time land revenue was collected in kind. The grain thus collected was stored in a place called *Modikhana*. From there it was issued out to the ruler's household, army etc, and sold to those who would buy. It was such a duty that Guru Nanak did. He was not placed in charge of the alms-house, as Latif would have us believe; for, as we shall see, the Guru had to render an account of the commodities placed in his charge. Such would not have been the case if the *Modikhana* had been as alms-house. Moreover, the complaints made against him to the *Nawab* were that he was giving away the contents of the *Modikhana* to the poor. An alms-house would have been meant for that very purpose and no complaints could have been raised against Guru Nanak's charity.

with all who got or bought rations from the Storehouse, soon won for him the good opinion of all. He came to be greatly esteemed by all who came in touch with him. By discharging his duties efficiently and to the satisfaction of all concerned, Guru Nanak removed the wrong impression, his previous conduct had given to his parents and others. The good reports reached the *Nawab*, too. He came to have full confidence in the Storekeeper about whom all spoke so highly.

While executing so well the duties of his office, Guru Nanak did not neglect or forget his divine duties. He was in tune with the Lord now as ever before. He would get up early, about a watch before day-break, and go out into the neighbouring forest to enjoy un-interrupted communion with the Lord of the universe. He would bathe in the little stream called the *Vein*. Then, sitting on its bank, he would dive deep into the ocean of ecstasy, and fly on the wings of the soul to the lotus feet of the Blissful Lord. As he watched the heavens above, inset with countless sparkling, twinkling starry gems, as he observed their reflection in the heaving bosom of the slow-moving stream, as he beheld Nature all round him, clothed in blissful peace, as the cool breeze from the stream gently fanned his worshipful face, a heavenly calm descended upon his heart, a thrill of quiet, refreshing joy imperceptibly passed through his whole being, and his soul expanded to engulf the whole universe in its embrace of love. He sat there charmed by the sublimity of all that he heard, felt, or saw. He would sit there for long, wrapt in mute adoration. Then the bliss that filled him, through and through, would break forth into heavenly music. He would sing the praises of the Lord. This continued till the rise of the sun. Then he would return to his worldly duties. There, too, while his body was engaged in performing his work, his heart and soul were with his Maker. It is recorded that when, in weighing out rations, he reached the number thirteen, which in the official Persian language was called *tera*, which, in turn, meant 'Thine' in Panjabi, he would pause, his face would assume a look of strange intoxication, and he would several times repeat, in his sweet, melodious voice, '*tera han tera, tera, I am Thine, O Thine, O Lord, Thine*' If the persons to whom the grain had to be dealt out happened to be poor customers, he would go on weighing it out to them and count each weight as *tera* or thirteen. Blessed,

indeed, were they on whom was thus bestowed, unasked, divine food for the soul as they came to have food for the body. This simple song of dedication charmed the hearers. As long as he sang, they all stood mute and spell-bound. In the evening he would retire again to the forest and give himself up to enjoyment of blissful communion with the Lord, whom he beheld enthroned in Nature and pervading everywhere. His love for the company of religious men-*Sadhus* and *Faqirs*-was fresh and strong as ever. He loved to feast all asceties and wandering faqirs who came to the city.

His open-handed charity won him the love of the poor and the needy. But his sister and brother-in-law felt uneasy; for he was not saving much out of his earnings. They knew that his father would be distressed to learn that his son was throwing away on beggars and *Faqirs* all that he earned. They put their heads together and devised a plan whereby he could probably be induced to be less free with his earnings. They decided to marry him. They feared lest the religious zeal which by then was quite clearly visible in his nature, should become too strong and lead him to renounce the world altogether and become a recluse. So they decided to yoke him to family life. They believed that conjugal affection would cure him of the slight 'waywardness' which his too frequent meetings with *Sadhus* had produced in his temperament. All that love and consideration which, till then, he had been bestowing on others would be diverted towards his wife and children. He would become a thrifty man of the world, laying by a good part of his earnings for the upkeep of his family. They knew how happy Mehta Kalu would be on hearing the good news of his son's having taken to real family life.

Thus did the fond relatives hope to wean him from that life of the spirit to which he had come to lead all men. Thus would they imprison in the family circle the affections that were to flow for the whole human race; thus would they tie down with family ties the spirit that was to break the chains from round the necks of millions of his fellow creatures; thus would they enchain his soul that, even then, was given to flying as freely as a bird in the skies and diving deep into the fathomless ocean of ecstasy. They might as well have tried to hold the winds in their grip, or bidden the waves of the sea to be still. Even Guru Nanak himself was powerless to resist, divert, or withstand the divine call. When it came, he was himself no longer. In fact, he lived ever in the arms of the Beloved Lord, even as a fish ever lives in the bosom of the river or

lake. To use his own words, "He was in love with God; he lived, moved, and his being in the Lord. In his love he would laugh, in his love he would weep and cry like a child, and in his love he would sit dumb and mute. He cared for none except his true, beloved Master, at whose door he ever begged for the food of the body and the spirit, and partook of it when He was pleased to bestow it."¹ Not for himself alone was he gathering the spiritual treasures, but for the whole human face.

Still, Guru Nanak's was to be a path different from the paths known to the world before. He was to show how a true life of religion could be lived amid the ties and duties of family life. So he agreed to get married. Less than three years after his appointment, that is in June, 1487, he was married to Mata Sulakhni, daughter of Baba Mula, a resident of Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur. But the marriage was powerless to divert his heart and soul from the path that he had come to lay down for humanity. All the same, he tried to be as considerate a husband as was consistent with his life of the spirit.

His parents had come to see him married. They were glad to learn that their son had, by a diligent discharge of his duties, earned a good name and was, to all appearances, on a good way to riches. They were happy to hope that, thenceforth, he would give up his infatuation for *Sadhus* and *Faqirs*, and divert that love to his wife and family. His loving companions of Talwandi, who had become enamoured of him, had also come. The first among them was Mardana, the musician. He asked the Master for a wedding gift and got a *rabab* or rebeck. What with his own inborn aptitude for music, and what with the loving favour of his Divine Master, Mardana turned out to be a peerless musician and singer. He would play on the rebeck as the Guru sang his spontaneous divine songs in a sweet melodious voice, or he would himself sweetly sing those songs stored in a tenacious memory, as the Master sat in mute adoration. Others also came. A regular *satsang* gathered there. The Guru fed them all out of the rations that were permitted him with his salary. He had no desire for hoarding. He distributed all he got. To many of the persons who had followed him from Talwandi he procured some employment at Sultanpur. They were, all of them, his disciples. They adored him. At dinner-

1. *Asa di Var*.

time they came and sat down with him. Thus assembled they listened devoutly to the divine songs and discourses of the Master. Out of them Bhai Bhagirath and Bhai Mansukh are still remembered for their love for and devotion to the Guru. Mansukh was the first person to record the Divine Songs of the Master as they were sung by him.

Time passed quietly by, Guru Nanak seemed, at last, to have found an occupation that, in every way, satisfied him. He seemed to have grown out of his early aversion to the affairs of the world. He seemed to have arranged a compromise between his own love for seclusion and his parents' desire for a busy, worldly life for him. He was proving to be an honest and capable employee, a loving and generous friend, a neighbour inspired by active sympathy for all, a man of free and open-handed charity, an excellent householder, and a pious, holy man of religion.

Very little is known about his married life except that two sons were born to him- Siri Chand in July 1494, and Lakhmi Das in February 1497.

It is related that when, on the thirteenth day of the birth of his first son, he came home from the *Modikhana*, he was surprised to find elaborate arrangements for 'purifying' the house supposed to have been polluted by the birth of the child. Guru Nanak did not believe in this Hindu superstition called *sutak*. He ridiculed the superstitious Hindu belief, ascribed to the *Shastras*, that the birth of a child or the death of any member of the family polluted the house, and special purification rites had to be performed to remove the pollution.

On this occasion he composed the following *Slokas* found in *Asa-di-Var*:-

'If we admit the idea of impurity birth or death, impurity will be found in everything.

There are worms in cow-dung and in wood;¹

There are no grains of corn without life.

In the first place, there is life in water by which everything is made green.

How can we keep away this impurity ? It enters into our kitchens.

Nanak, impurity cannot be removed in this way; it can be washed away by divine knowledge.'

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1. When these (cow-dung and wood) are burnt as fuel in the kitchen, the worms die. If death caused impurity, the kitchen would be polluted every time when cooking was done.

'The heart gets impure with greed, and the tongue, with lying;
 The eyes get impure by staring at another's wealth, his wife, and her beauty:
 Nanak these impurities lead the soul of man bound to hell.'
 'All other impurity is superstitious.
 Birth and death are ordained; we come and go by His Will.
 Eating and drinking which God gave as sustenance is pure.
 Nanak, the pious persons who know God have no impurity.'

Asa-di-Var, XVIII, 1, 2, 3.

Needless to say that his sister, Bebe Nanaki, and his wife bowed before his wishes and gave up such superstitious beliefs and rites.

Respected by the public, trusted and honoured by his employer, loved by his disciples and companions, and adored by his wife, he lived a life of happiness and peace. This seemed to be the ideal life for a young man. But Guru Nanak had a higher mission. The sad, still music, the plaintive voice of poor, afflicted humanity, which he ever heard in his soul, would sometimes catch him in the midst of his songs or reveries. Tears would flow down his cheeks. A quiver would run through his body. A yearning to make an immediate reponse to the call of humanity almost overcame at such times. He would wish to go at once and cool and soothe the burning world. But the time was not yet. The Divine call had not yet come. He was to wait for that. A circle of disciples gathered round him at Sultanpur, and he contented himself, for the time being, with kindling their spirits with the heavenly spark which he had got as a gift from God.

Evil natures would discover faults even in the faultless. The fame of Guru Nanak excited jealousy in some evil breasts. Some did not like his 'thoughtless' charity; others disliked his free association with men of all castes and creeds; some did not relish his iconoclastic religious views, which he disseminated with effective zeal; others could not bear to hear him praised by religious-minded Hindus and Muslims alike; some were jealous because of his being held in high esteem by the *Nawab*. They did what they thought would ruin his credit with the *Nawab*, put an end to his charities, and, thereby, push him to the background. They reported to the *Nawab* that the storekeeper was squandering away the contents of the storehouse. It would be empty in no time. Twice or thrice, on the basis of such reports, the *Nawab* checked the accounts. Every time some balance was found due to the Divine storekeeper.

One time, when the adverse report was unusually serious, Guru Nanak was even kept confined in a room, pending the examination of his accounts. That room is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Kothri Sahib* or the Sacred Cell. Each time Guru Nanak's credit with the *Nawab* increased, till the latter gave up listening to the evil reports of ill-meaning persons.

CHAPTER 12

THE CALL

For twelve years or so Guru Nanak thus demonstrated to the world what he had come to teach, namely, how a man of religion, loving and serving God through a loving service of His creation, should live in the world, for the world, and yet be above the world-laughing, enjoying, making merry, eating and spending, and performing all the duties of an official, a householder, and a man of the world, and yet maintaining, all the time, an attitude of aloofness, detachment, and renunciation towards the alluring things of the world; keeping ever in tune with the Infinite Lord. It seems that the purpose of the Guru was to demonstrate that the household was a school in which self-love was changed into love for others and that to earn an honest living was an essential prerequisite of godliness. By precept and example, by his divine touch, he initiated many into this life of the Spirit. But for how long could the bush conceal the sun ? How could Talwandi or Sultanpur, or even his motherland, monopolize the precious, divine commodity which was meant for the whole world ? Humanity at large called him to be its saviour. There was an anguish in the voice of humanity, the confused murmur that arose from the human depths and that, comprising in it all tears, all agonies, all afflictions, became for him the sigh of the whole creation; a sigh for one who would end the suffering and make one and all happy and full of joy. Night and day the call of humanity would quietly steal into his heart, and gathering force and volume grow into a loud lament as that of a child left all alone and lost in a vast, limitless wilderness. But he was waiting for the Call from above. He would go forth when bidden. The Call came at last.

One day, in the year 1497 A.D., he went out to bathe as usual in the stream. An attendant sat near his clothes. He plunged into the stream, at the place since called *Sant Ghat*. He delayed too long that day. The servant waited in great anxiety. He then looked into and along the stream, but there was no sign of Guru Nanak. At last, he sadly concluded that his Master must

have been drowned. He went and informed Jai Ram. Soon the news spread in the town. The *Nawab* also heard it. People flocked to the river. The *Nawab* also reached the spot. Divers were ordered to search for the body. They failed. All returned to the city in great sorrow.

His disappearance caused evil tongues to be busy again. It was said that he had squandered away the contents of the storehouse, that when he had found his position to have become irretrievable, he had gone and drowned himself. These reports did not fail to reach the ears of the *Nawab*. He caused the provisions to be weighed, the cash to be counted, and the accounts to be examined. It was found that a handsome balance was due to the Guru. This confounded the people. 'Why, then, has he gone ? Where has he gone ? Such questions were on everybody's lips, but there was none who could answer them.

Well, where had he gone ? 'Not an easy matter for the like of us to comprehend or explain. The earliest record of the event is found in the poetical works of Bhai Gurdas. This great Sikh savant was initiated into the Faith by Guru Amardas, the third Guru. He had thus ample opportunities of meeting many Sikhs who had been seen Guru Nanak and had lived with him. We also know that Bhai Gurdas presented his compositions to Guru Arjan Dev, who studied them critically. Guru Arjan Dev pronounced the works of Bhai Gurdas to be a Key to *Guru Granth Sahib*. So we can take it that whatever is recorded by Bhai Gurdas had the approval of Guru Arjan Dev. Bhai Gurdas refers to this event in the following words :

Penance he did austere beyond measure.

And lucky was he,

For the gracious *Hari*

Bestowed on him His fullest pleasure.

The Guru was given a robe of honour in the True Lord's Place.

Happy and swift,

He got the gift

Of priceless Name, Humility and grace.

From there he fixed a steady, thoughtful gaze

On the world below;

What a scene of woe !

He found the earth in dreadful flames, ablaze.

No teacher or guide was there,
 Chaotic dark was everywhere;
 The whole creation,
 In deep agitation,
 Was raising a piteous, woeful moan,
 Crying that a way in the dark be shown.
 Donning a dress very oddly made,
 Forth he went, a path he laid
 Of true renunciation;
 And with determination
 Strong he started a huge campaign
 To better the world and end the pain.'

This is then what Bhai Gurdas has recorded about this event. We should bear in mind the fact that this had the approval of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru.

The next record that we have of the Guru's life is what is called the Old Chronicle (*Puratan Janamsakhi*), believed to have been written about the year 1635 A.D., i.e., in the time of Guru Hargobind. In this chronicle the writer had tried to describe the events of the spiritual world in the language of this world. He says that as the Guru took a dip in the stream, angels from God bade him follow them. They took him into the presence of God. The Lord extended to him a cordial welcome and offered him a cup of nectar as a mark of His favour. He quaffed it gratefully and with humble joy. God said to him, 'O Nanak, I am ever with thee. I have blessed thee and those who utter thy name with love will also be blessed. Go and repeat My Name and make others do the same, instruct them in My Will. Abide uncontaminated by the world. Practise the repetition of My Name, ablutions, worship, and meditation. I have given thee this cup of nectar as a pledge of My regard. O Nanak, to him upon whom My look of kindness resteth, be thou merciful, as I shall be merciful to all on whom thy look of kindness doth rest. My name is *Parbrahm Parmesar*, the Absolute God, and thou art *Guru Parmesar*, the Guru God.' The Guru is represented to have humbly accepted the duty thus laid on him by his Maker. He thanked and praised the Lord and stood mutely enjoying the Blissful Presence of the Lord. He was then conducted back into the waters of the stream. Full three earthly days had passed by then.

Among the Guru's own sacred Songs there is one which is generally believed by the faithful to describe this event. That song may be translated thus :

A Minstrel of work was I.
 To His work He did me apply.
 The Mighty Lord to me did say.
 "Sing my praises night and day."
 The Master summoned me, His Minstrel, to His Elernal Abode,
 And a robe of Name and eulogy true, He on me bestowed,
 A cup of the Nectar of True Name
 By His grace to me there came
 At the bidding of God I took my fill,
 It gave me peace which fills me still.
 All else can taste it, if so they will.....

Majh ki Var.

Macauliffe writes, "One day after bathing (Guru) Nanak disappeared in the forest, and was taken in a vision to God's presence" Whatever words we may choose whatever picture we may form for our limited understanding, the fact remains that for three earthly days Guru Nanak was considered to have been lost or drowned. Listening to the myriad voices of Nature, clothed in dawn, with the doleful, piteous moan of humanity ringing in his heart, the call of the Gracious Lord captivating his soul, a sort of charm having overspread his whole being, he went whither the Lord was pleased to draw him. Yes, listening to all these voices, and hearkening to the Divine Call, he went as far as the thick solitudes where nothing any longer comes to disturb the collected soul. There, away from all, in the eye of the Lord, he sat wrapt in mute adoration. Humanity's doleful cry was in his ears, in his heart and soul, in the form of a dismal song. 'It was the song of the mystic bird. This song said, in marvellous modulations, all that man thinks and feels, all that he suffers, all that he seeks, all that falls short of fulfilment for him.' It summed up for him, in sweet harmonies, the destinies of living beings, the distressed agony of a flaming, passion-ridden world, and appealed to him, in the name of the immense pity that filled his soul, to go forth with his message of hope and liberation, and save the world. The song that rang in his heart, inaudible to the bodily ears, lifted his soul softly on light, strong wings, to the heights where

dwells the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and from where the soul can look downwards on the whole creation as on a map spread out. Once in that Blissful presence, Guru Nanak forgot all about the earth, the sky, and time; he forgot himself.

While enjoying the blissful vision of the Lord, the Guru composed and sang a hymn to the accompaniment of the spontaneous music of heaven,' in which he spoke of the boundless glory of the Lord as revealed to him and of his own incapacity to describe it to others. That hymn was as follows :-

'Were I to live for millions over millions of years, and the air alone where my food and drink;

Were I to dwell in a cave where I beheld neither sun nor moon, and even in dream could find no place to sleep in;

I should still not be able to express Your worth; how great shall I call Your Name ?

The true Formless One is centered in Himself.

People describe Him on the basis of what they have heard about Him;

But if it pleases Him, He in His Grace reveals Himself.

Were I to be felled and cut into pieces, were I to be ground like grain in a mill ;

Were I to be burnt in fire and blended with the ashes;

I should still not be able to express your worth; how great shall I call you Name?

Were I to become a bird and fly across a hundred heavens;

Were I to vanish from human gaze and neither eat nor drink;

I should still not be able to express Your worth; how great shall I call Your Name ?

Nanak, had I books weighing millions of tons and could read and interpret them all;

Had I an inexhaustible supply of ink and could move my pen like the wind,

I should not still be able to express Your worth; how great shall I call Your Name ?'

Sri Rag.

The Guru composed another hymn in which he expressed the infinite, unfathomable glory of God and his own incapacity to fully comprehend and describe Him, and prayed to Him that He might be pleased to grant him the capacity and vision to see Him pervading everyone and everywhere so that he might dedicate his whole being to Him through the service of his fellow-

creatures. Here is that hymn :-

'You, wise and omniscient, are the river, how can I, a fish, obtain a knowledge of
Your limit?

Whenever I look, there you are, if I am separated from you, I shall
break and die.

I know neither the fisherman nor his net.

When I am in pain or trouble, I remember and call upon you.

You are omnipresent, though I thought you to be far away.

Whatever I do, it is all in Your presence and within Your ken;

You beholds my acts, yet I deny them.

I have not done Your work or uttered Your Name;

Whatever You gives, that I eat.

There is no other door for me but yours; to whose gate shall I go ?

Nanak makes one supplication-

"Let my soul and body be dedicated to You."

You are near, You are far, and You are midway.

You see and hear everything; by your power you creates the universe.

Whatever order pleases, says Nanak, that alone can prevail.'

Sri Rag.

From his happy state Guru Nanak returned when the Lord bade him. He went to the house where he used to take rest and lodge his disciples, guests, and friends. All who saw him found that he was a changed man. He opened wide the doors and invited the poor to take away all that was there. To those who hesitated, he himself handed over the articles that he found in the house.

The news spread in the city. A large crowd of spectators assembled at the place. *Nawab* Daulat Khan also came. He enquired from Guru Nanak what had happened to him. But the Guru heard nothing and said nothing. He seemed to be in a strange intoxication, to be like a man possessed. People said that some evil spirit had possessed him. The *Nawab* realized that the Guru's acts were the result of his abandonment of the world. He said that it was a great pity, shook his head, and went away.

The Call had come. Having given away all his material wealth to the poor, he was now ready to distribute, with an equally liberal and generous heart, the spiritual riches that he had received from his Lord. He went out in the wilderness. Mardana alone accompanied him with his rebeck.

CHAPTER 13

THE RESPONSE

Even when Guru Nanak was generally believed to have been drowned, his sister, Bebe Nanaki, had kept alive her faith in the divine nature of her brother. 'Rivers can't drown him,' she had said. Now, too, when all proclaimed that some evil spirit had come to possess her brother, who, in consequence, had given away to the poor all that he had in the rest-house and would speak to none, her heart did not droop, her faith did not waver. 'What evil spirit can possess him ?' said she. 'He has come to drive away the spirit of evil that possesses mankind.' Some well-meaning simple persons, under the belief that Guru Nanak was possessed with an evil spirit, took a *Mulla* or Muslim Priest to the place where the Guru was sitting and asked him to exorcise the spirit. The *Mulla* began to utter some spells and write down some holy words on a bit of paper. This paper was to form an amulet which was to be hung round Guru Nanak's neck. The Guru smiled and sang :

"Cursed are the lives of those
Who write the Name of God and sell it."

Var Sarang, Shlok. 20 (1).

The *Mulla* heeded not the Guru's serious objurcation, but continued uttering his incantations and writing out his charm. Having finished what he thought was necessary for the exorcism, he addressed the evil spirit that was supposed to have possessed the Guru and said, "Who art thou ?" This was the usual question for such times. The *Mulla* believed that the spirit would speak, disclose its identity, and be prevailed upon to quit the sufferer. But he had a strange patient this time to deal with. The Guru replied:

"Some do call me an evil sprite,
Others in me do a demon descry;
Some declare me a luckless wight,
But Nanak the humble am I."

Rag Maru Shlok 7 [1].

The *Mulla* was convinced that no evil spirit possessed the Master. He made ready to retire. Others near him then said that perhaps Guru Nanak had become mad. Thereupon, the Guru made a sign to Mardana to play the rebeck and sang a song which may be translated thus :

“Mad is Nanak gone, O totally mad,
 But mad is he for the Bounteous Dad.
 None save God does he heed or know,
 To none save Him does he allegiance owe or show.
 Only then may one truly mad be known,
 When from fear of God has his madness grown.
 Only then is he mad in sooth, O brother,
 When he does one thing and does no other-
 Finds his Master's Order and Will,
 And obeys Him readily, cheerfully still.
 The Will of God with him ever prevail,
 Wisdom of every sort he deems of little avail.
 Then is a man truly mad, O friend,
 When His Love does God to him extend,
 Unworthy and low does God he himself deem
 And holds all else in high esteem.
 Mad of this type haes Nanak grown.
 For the sake of Him do let him alone.”

Rag Maru.

This silenced the *Mulla* and the rest. They were convinced that Guru Nanak was possessed with the spirit of God, and had become a true *Faqir*. All bowed and went away. For the whole of that day and the following night the Guru sat as in a trance. He neither spoke nor moved. On the following day he came to himself. The first words which he then uttered were, ‘There is no Hindu, there is no Muhammadan,’ that is, both Hindus and Muhammadans had forgotten the precepts of their religions, had gone astray from the path of the only True God. ‘It was a fit formula for the commencement of his mission, which was to reconcile the two warring communities of India into one brotherhood by showing them how they

had fallen from their high ideals and had forgotten God, their common Father.’¹

Soon the words were on everybody’s lips. The Hindus had really ceased to be true Hindus. Moreover, they had become too deeply demoralized to resent or heed such sayings as that of the Guru. The Muhammadans, however, were at the height of power. They were the rulers. Their religion was spreading everywhere. How could a ‘Hindu’ dare say in the Muslim *rule* that no Muhammadan was in the land. The *Qazi* took the words to the *Nawab* and complained to him that the Guru Nanak was casting a great slur on the whole Muhammadan community. Although the *Nawab* had come to believe that Guru Nanak was a true lover of God and incapable of injuring any one’s feelings, yet the *Qazi* had his way. The *Nawab* sent for Guru Nanak. The latter refused to obey the summons. He said, ‘I have no longer any concern with the *Nawab* now. I am no longer in his service. I am now a servant of Him who is the sovereign of the whole world.’

The messenger returned and told the *Nawab* what the Guru had said. The *Qazi* rose angrily and said, ‘I will myself bring the heretic to your presence.’ He went with a posse of his men, but as he approached the Guru, the emanations of love and piety proceeding from the latter’s person cooled his anger and humbled his spirit. He saluted the Guru and said respectfully, ‘Nanak, come with me; the *Nawab* requests you in the name of your Lord to favour him with a visit. He wishes to understand from you the meaning of your slogan “There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim.” I hope you will not disappoint him.’

A call made in the name of God, Guru Nanak could not resist. He got up and went into the presence of the *Nawab*. The latter received him with great respect and expressed his sorrow at having lost such an honest *Modi*. The Governor then seated the Guru beside himself and directed the *Qazi* to ask the Guru the questions that he wanted to get answered.

1. Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, p.5. The Guru’s words have been generally interpreted as given above. But some recent writers have put up a new interpretation, namely, ‘I see here neither a Hindu nor a Musalman; only man.’ If the words had meant this, they would have conveyed a sane and saintly exhortation or advice, and would not have been resented by the *Qazi* and others. But they were actually resented bitterly, as is admitted by even these writers; for the represent the *Qazi* as saying, ‘Why dost thou disparage my faith?’ What later passed between the Guru and the *Qazi*, which is narrated by these writers also, clearly shows that the Guru meant that he saw no true Hindu or Muhammadan anywhere.

The *Qazi* said, 'What do you mean by saying that there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim. About Hindus I would say nothing. There may or may not be any true Hindu in the land. But how can you say that there is no Muhammadan ? There are millions of true followers of the Prophet.'

The Guru then made a sign to Mardana to play the rebeck and sang a song which may be translated thus :-

'To be worthy of being called a Muhammadan is difficult. One should, in the first place, acquire the virtues and qualities of a Muhammadan and then should he boast of being a follower of the Prophet. Let him first truly love the religion preached by men of God and rid himself of vanity and pride of self. Resigning himself to God, let him become lowly and humble. Let him put aside the fear of birth and death. Let him joyfully accept the Will of God. Let him believe God to be the Doer, all in all. Let him quell all thoughts of self. Let him be kind and merciful to all living beings. When a man does all this, and not before, can he be called a true Muhammadan.'

Var Majh Sholk [I].

The *Qazi* was not yet satisfied. He put some more questions. As Mardana played the rebeck, the Guru sang as follows :-

'Make mercy thy mosque. Let faith and sincerity be thy prayer-carpet; and what is just and lawful, thy holy book. Let humility be thy circumcision; sweetness of behaviour, thy fasting; thus shalt thou a true Muhammadan be. Let virtuous deeds be thy Ka'aba; Truth, thy spiritual guide, thy creed, and prayer; and acceptance of His Will in everything, thy rosary. Do all this, my friend, and God will bestow honour on thee.

'Listen further ! Let all fully realize that what belongs by right to others should be shunned by Muhammadans as they shun pork and by Hindus as they shun beef, the two things forbidden most peremptorily by their religions. Be sure that only then will the spiritual guides of both Hindus and Muslims intercede for their followers, when the latter do not eat carrion, or what is thus forbidden, when they cease to usurp other people's rights and things. Mere talk, lip professions, and idle observances will not take thee to Paradise. It is rather by practice of Truth in thy daily life that thou canst gain emancipation. Whatever is forbidden thee as food cannot become permissible by being seasoned with spices. Similarly, if one, by deceit or force, snatches away and misappropriates what belongs to some-

one else by right, and then gives away some of it in charity or as offerings at places of worship, the wrongly taken or misappropriated article cannot become one's lawful or rightful property. False and hypocritical professions can beget falsehood only. No amount of them can make falsehood become truth, just as no amount of spice can make the forbidden food become permissible. So give up mere lip-professions and all vain, deceptive show and engage thyself in virtuous deeds.

Var Majh, Shlok 7 (2).

'Your people have five prayers which are said at the different times in the day and are called by five different names. Listen, I tell you what the five prayers should really be. Unalloyed truth should be the first one. Honest living and acquisition permitted by law, religion, and morally should be the second; charity to all, in the name of God, and working for the good of all should be the third; good intentions and a pure heart should be the fourth; and the praise and glorification of God, the fifth. Let good and virtuous acts be thy *Kalma* or the creed to be ever repeated. Do all this, my friend. Then alone canst thou be worthy to be called a Muhammadan. Otherwise, by the practice of falsehood and deceit, only false things can be had and not true religion or religious merit.'

Var Majh, Shlok 7 (3).

After having uttered these hymns, the Guru turned to the *Qazi* and said, 'Would you still aver that what I say is wrong, that there are many true Muslims here and elsewhere ? Can you yourself claim to be one ? Be honest and frank.'

The admonition went home. They all realized the truth of the Guru's words. They recollected how the Muhammadans had everywhere forcibly snatched away other people's goods and were even then doing so all round them. They realized that, with most of them, religion had come to mean a mere mechanical repetition of little understood Arabic text, the observance of certain forms and ceremonies, fasting during the prescribed month, and hating their Hindu neighbours; that religion had ceased to inspire goodly human virtues in the Muhammadans, it was engendering inhuman and irreligious vices, sins, and crimes, and was inciting them to the murder and oppression of the Hindus. Those who heard the Guru's narration of the qualities which should distinguish a true Muhammadan, felt all this and more. They were struck at the daring of the Guru in having uttered these

truths at the court of a Muhammadan ruler and in the presence of a large gathering of fanatic Muslims of those dark days. But the sweet humility of the Guru had disarmed all opposition. There was a force in the look of his eyes which overcame and suppressed all words of protest even as they took shape in the minds of the Muslim hearers. All of them bowed in deep reverence.

After a while, the *Qazi* mustered courage to ask the Guru whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. The Guru replied, 'I am neither this nor that. I am a lover of God and servant of man. To me all religions are His different routes to reach His abode.'

By now it was the time for the afternoon *Nimaz* (Muslim prayers). As the company was about to proceed to the mosque, the *Qazi* said to the Guru. 'If all religions are the same to you, will you join us in offering prayers in the mosque?' The *Nawab* also made the same request.

'With pleasure', said the Guru, 'if either of you will lead the prayers.' The whole company, including the Guru, proceeded to the mosque. The news that the Guru was going to join the Muslim prayers in the mosque soon spread in the city. It was rumoured that he was about to embrace Islam. Local Hindus, including his brother-in-law, *Diwan* Jai Ram, hurried to the mosque to see what was going to occur.

The *Qazi* stood at the head of the gathering and began to repeat the Arabic text and to perform the prescribed bodily movements like bending and kneeling. Others imitated him in these latter. But the Guru kept standing all the time. This was regarded as a sacrilege and insult to the holy prayer and Islam. The *Qazi* was filled with rage to behold this. The Guru added fuel to the fire by laughing at the *Qazi*, while the latter was formally engaged in prayer; for it was another act of great daring and insult-to laugh at a *Qazi* at prayers in a mosque. The *Qazi*'s face changed not a little. When the prayer was over, he complained to the *Nawab* that Guru Nanak had insulted the whole assembly, nay, the Muhammadan religion, to boot. The *Nawab* was of a generous temperament. He approached the Guru and said, 'Good Sir, you promised to join us in prayers, but, instead, you laughed at the *Qazi* as he was engaged in them.'

'Yes,' replied Guru Nanak, 'I did promise to join him at prayers. But he was not praying at all. While with his tongue he was repeating the text and

with his body was performing the prescribed bodily movements, he himself was chasing his new-born colt which he had left untethered at home and was trying to save it from falling into the deep pit in his courtyard. I could not join him at that. It was amusing to see him thus; his body at prayers and he at home, running after his colt. So I laughed. How we deceive ourselves and the world and try to deceive God Himself !'

The *Qazi* lowered his head. Guru Nanak had read his mind. But then taking courage, he said, "But there was the *Nawab* than whom no devouter Muhammadan exists hereabouts. You could have joined him."

'No doubt,' replied the Guru, 'the *Nawab* is a good man; but he, too, was not engaged in prayers. He was purchasing horses in Kabul. All others who imitated your movements were, likewise, not here at prayers. They were far off, each attending to his own profane affairs. Such prayers are worse than useless. They engender pride, vanity, and intolerance. I could not have joined you at such prayers.'

Saying this, the Guru rose to go away. The *Nawab* reverently touched his feet and said, 'O true *Faqir*, accepted to God, stary here. All this authority, and all this estate, I lay at your feet. Accept them. Be my Master, let me be thy slave for ever. Don't go away.'

'No, friend,' replied the Guru with half-shut eyes. 'The Great Commander calls me. I must go forth and engage in His service. Duty calls me to distant lands. Keep thy authority and esate; but also keep the love of God and man in thy breast. Then shalt thou be surely saved.'

The *Nawab* bent his head in reverence and said, 'As you please. But do kindly accept for the use of your family the sum that has been found due to you from the *Modikhana*.'

The Guru desired him to distribute the amount among the poor. 'As for my family and myself, the Sustainer of all will provide for us.'

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1. There was a time when people with Western education would not believe that Guru Nanak could have thus read the thoughts of the *Qazi* and the *Nawab*. But now, when from the West itself have come the sciences of thought reading, television, chairvoyance, etc., that scepticism is giving way to an intelligent faith in such happenings in the world of the spirit. For a more detailed note on such phenomena, the reader is invited to turn to Appendix B and to books suggested there.
 2. Bhai Gurdas has given a list of the more prominent Sikhs of Guru Nanak's time. *Nawab* Daulat Khan is one of them.

Saying this, the Guru rose and repaired to the same secluded place from where he had come to the court when entreated in the name of God. Many holy men of both communities followed him there and stayed with him. Every day people gathered round him to obtain light and instruction. Many were blessed by the Master with the priceless gift of the True Name, of a life of love and service practised in the name of God.

The news of Guru Nanak's having renounced the world reached his and his wife's parents. They were greatly perturbed. They came to Sultanpur. A learned *Pandit* was with them. He tried to dissuade Guru Nanak from the path of renunciation which he had entered upon. He advised him, on the authority of the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, to worship God in the usual Hindu way and to look after his family. His father, Mehta Kalu, said, 'We are old now. It is your duty to serve us in our old age.' His father-in-law, Baba Mul Chand, said, 'You are a husband and father. It is your duty to look after your family, to bring up and educate your sons, to do for them what your father did for you. If you were thus determined to desert your wife and children, you should not have married.' His wife clasped his feet, washed them with her tears and said, 'Who is mine in this world but thee, O lord of life ? In whose care dost thou leave me and these thy sons ? Have pity on them, if not on me.'

His sister, Bebe Nanaki, stood quiet. In her eyes were tears of sorrow at the imminent separation from her beloved brother and Guru, and on her face was a deep calm, born of a willing resignation to the will of the Master. She liked him to stay, but she would not stand in the way of his resolve to go in obedience to the call from above.

The Guru heard all that his friends and relatives had to say. He then looked up and said, 'I admit that it is my duty to serve my father. But there is the Father above, who is the Father of all. He bids me go abroad and cool and soothe the flaming, distressed world. The Divine Call is too strong and urgent for me to resist. He who sends me thus on His own mission will be your stay in your old age. Rely on Him, permit me to go, and bless me with your prayers that I may prosper in my undertaking.'

The words of the Guru and the look of his eyes had their effect. His parents, under some mysterious influence, and even against their deep desires said, 'All right' and stopped back.

The Guru then turned to Baba Mul Chand, his father-in-law, and said, 'It is not man by himself that brings forth children into the world. They are sent hither by the Creator and Sustainer of the world. We are here to carry out His divine plan. Have no anxiety for thy daughter and thy grand-children. God, whose children they are, will take care of them. I am called forth to serve and save God's children in other places. The whole wide world, the off-spring of my Father above, is henceforth my family. I must do my duty that way now. Don't grieve, but extend thy blessings to me.' Baba Mul Chand and his wife, Mata Chando Rani, were reconciled to the will of their son-in-law.

The Guru then turned to his wife, and said, 'Take heart, O favoured daughter of the Eternal Father. My duty here is ended for the present. He, who bids me leave thee and my dear sons, will look after you all. Great is thy love, great has been thy devotion, and great is to be thy sacrifice; but be sure that greater still will be the reward which the Lord will bestow on thee. May He ever abide with thee and thy sons ! I must go to save my Father's sons and daughters from sin and sufferings. Bid me a cheerful adieu.' She felt resigned to her lord's will. Her head bent low and the Master's hand blessed it.

The Guru then turned to his sister and said, 'My respected sister, thy love is different from that of all others. It is of a higher type. I read thy mind in thy looks. Have no anxiety. God will be ever with thee. I, too, shall be ever with thee. Whenever thy love for me arouses in thee an unsuppressible longing to see me, I shall hear thy unuttered summons and shall come to thee.¹ But all the same, try to calm thy beating, loveful heart. Think of the Lord alone. I know my duty towards thee. But innumerable sisters in woe and agony are crying to be comforted. I must go.'

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1. It is recorded in the *Janamsakhis* of the Guru that whenever his sister implored him for a visit, however far off he might be at the time, he came to her the very instant, stayed with her for a short time, took food and drink, and then went back as mysteriously as he had come. To many modern minds stuffed with the eighteenth or early nineteenth century scepticism, which was the first reaction of the human mind to the impact of scientific thought and discovery, such statements will appear impossible and against Nature. To convince himself that such things, seemingly impossible and certainly inexplicable at present, do actually happen, the reader is invited to study Appendix B and follow up the subject as suggested there.

The Guru then took up his sons in his arms, in turn, pressed them to his bosom and lips, smiled on them his gracious smile, and then handed them back to their mother. He then lovingly passed his hand over their heads and faces, and blessed them. After that he bade farewell to all his relatives. They went away.

The news that Guru Nanak was about to set out on travels soon spread in the city. All his disciples and admirers came to seek his blessings. The *Nawab* also came among them. The Guru blessed them all with the gift of the True Name, instructed them in the fundamentals of his faith, and bade them return to their places, and lead virtuous, useful lives.

CHAPTER 14

EXALTS THE LOWLY

A little time after, the Guru resolved to go on his extensive tours, called *Udasis*. He finally took leave of his family, devotees, and friends, and set out with Mardana as his companion. He spent some time in the Panjab, visiting various places, converting Hindus and Muslims to his views, and establishing *Manjis* or missionary centres wherever he went. Crossing the river Beas, he came to the place where now stands the town of Goindwal. It was a wide wilderness then. Sitting on the river's bank, the Guru meditated on Nature and her indwelling Lord. His soul was attuned to the celestial music that was inaudible to the ears, filling the earth and the sky. Beside him Mardana was playing on his rebeck and singing the Master's songs in marvellous modulations. On light, strong wings the Guru's soul rose to the feet of the Blissful Lord and held them fast. For two days the Guru sat thus with his eyes closed, and his countenance glowing with a calm, radiant glory.

Mardana sat near him. He was feeling hungry. He laid aside his rebeck. He looked all round for any sign of a habitation nearby or of a chance traveller. None was there. He was getting impatient. When the Guru came to himself, Mardana said to him, 'Master, either bless me with a little of thy power of enjoying the Lord's company in complete disregard of the bodily needs, or please to choose thy way through inhabited places; otherwise this poor *Mirasi*, whom thou hast taken out of the very dregs of society and made a *Bhai* or brother of thine, will some day lie a corpse in some jungle. Who will then sing to thee thy ambrosial, delicious songs? What attraction dost thou find in this wilderness that thou hast sat here for the last two days, unmindful of the needs of thy body, and of the cravings of thy weak companion?'

Guru Nanak smiled and said, 'This place has been blessed by the Lord. A great one will erect here a Temple whence he will bestow on all, at all hours,

food for the body and the spirit.¹ As for thee and me, let us learn to look to God.'

At that time a *Zimindar* came 'by chance', as some will say, persuaded by the Provident Lord, as Guru Nanak said, under the subtle influence of the thought waves sent forth by the Guru, as the modernists would assert. The *Zimindar* gave them food for the body. In exchange, he got the priceless food for the soul-food which could never surfeit or exhaust.

From there the two started on their way. What way ? That which the Guru's feet took under the Lord's direction. At all places which they visited, the Guru weaned people from irreligion or Godless religion, and put them on the right path. In a few days they reached a pool of clear water in the vicinity of Sultanwind. Here, sitting on its bank, under a shady *Ber* tree, the Guru sang the Lord's praises, When re-starting, the Guru said, 'Here shall another great one build a Temple of *Hari* whence divine, nourishing food of the spirit will be distributed free and freely at all hours.' That pool is the site of the sacred tank of Amritsar the Lake of Nectar- in the midst of which stands the Golden Temple. On the bank of the Lake of old *Ber* tree, under which the Guru sat, still exists. It is called the *Dukhbhanjani Ber* or the *Ber* Tree that destroyeth all sorrow and suffering.

Travelling in this way, halting in several places as his mood directed him, everywhere knitting people, Hindus and Muslims, to the feet of the Almighty Father, laying, in every place, the foundation of the Holy Fellowship which he had come to found, the Guru reached Lahore. During his stay there he continued delivering to all, in his own sweet, friendly way, his divine message of Devotion, Love, and Service. People in large numbers heard him and became his disciples. After a short stay at Lahore, the Guru started from there and reached Saidpur, now called Eminabad, in the district of Gujranwala, Pakistan. He went to the house of a low-caste artisan, Lalo by name. This Lalo was a Godfearing man who lived by the sweat of his brow and took pleasure in serving *Sadhus* and wayfarers. Such people were dear to Guru Nanak. He would go miles and miles to see such ones.

1. At this place Guru Amar Dass, the third Guru, dug a *bauli* or well with steps reaching to the surface of water, and made the place his residence. He started here a *Langar* or free kitchen, where all were fed at all hours, while discourses and divine songs supplied food for the soul.

Bhai Lalo joyfully received the holy guests. One look at the countenance of Guru Nanak, radiant with divine glory, was enough to convince Bhai Lalo that his devotion to the Lord was about to bear fruit. The Saviour had come who would rekindle his soul with a divine spark, make him reborn into a life of the spirit, bestow on him the gift of true Devotion, and, ultimately, make him one with the Lord. At the approach of the guests, Bhai Lalo left his tools and rose to welcome them. He took them into his humble cottage, seated the Guru on a little cot, the only one that he had, and began to cook food in a regular cooking-square. Mardana was surprised at the Guru's choice of a host. There were, in the city, several men of wealth and position who would have gladly welcomed him and feasted him on rich food in grand mansions. He had halted at the hut of a poor man, who had only one cot and had no wife or cook. What sort of food could the artisan prepare?

The Guru read Bhai Mardana's thoughts. He was amused. With his face beaming with a smile of love, the Guru said, 'Brother, don't be puzzled. I have chosen a holy one as my host. Holy is the man who loves the Lord and earns his living by honest labour. This place is holy and far more comfortable than the spacious abodes of the rich parasites who live on other people's earnings.

Bhai Lalo had, by then, cooked the food-simple, coarse bread and *sag*, or green pot-herbs boiled and salted. He begged the Guru to step into the *Chauka* or the cooking-square, and partake of the humble fare. The Guru replied, 'Brother, the whole earth is as good as a cooking-square. True and devoted servants of the Lord need not bother about ceremonial purity; for they are even pure and undefiled. Bring the food here.' At the sight of this simple, coarse bread, Mardana became a little uneasy at first. He thought he would not be able to chew and swallow it. He saw that the Guru was eating it with relish and with a cheerful countenance. Mardana also reluctantly put a morsel in his mouth. Ah ! the wonder of it ! He found that he had never tasted anything so delicious as this coarse bread. As Guru Nanak said, love, truth, and honest labour formed the ingredients of the coarse fare. It could not but be delicious.

After a few days' halt, the Guru made ready to go. But Bhai Lalo fell at his feet and prayed him to stay a little longer. Such a loving request the Guru had not the heart to reject. He agreed to stay. Bhai Mardana begged permis-

sion to go and see his people at Talwandi. He was allowed to do so, but was told to return soon. The Guru stayed there till his return.

During his stay at Bhai Lalo's the Guru used to repair to a secluded place where, sitting or lying on a bed of pebbles or sand, he meditated on the Lord.¹ At nightfall he returned to the house of Bhai Lalo. By and by, the news spread in the city that a Bedi Khatri of Talwandi, who had turned a *Sadhu*, and who had a low-caste Muhammadan as his companion, was putting up at the house of a *Shudra*, and was eating the food cooked by that low-caste man. 'This strange combination of a so-called Khatri saint with a low-caste Muhammadan minstrel, living and dining with a Hindu *Shudra*, scandalized the high-caste people of Eminabad.' They named him *Kurahia* or a man who had abandoned the right path and taken to the wrong one. Some learned Brahmins came to counsel him. They hoped to bring him back to the path, prescribed in the *Vedas* and *Shastras*. But they had to go back in utter confusion. Their own old faith got a shaking but, they would not give it up. They were making a living by its means. Still, several Hindus and Muhammadans, who heard his divine songs and discourses, and looked on his glorious countenance, owned him as their spiritual guide and became his Sikhs. The Hindus began to call him '*Nanak Tapa*' or 'Nanak the Hermit'. The Muhammadans called him '*Nanak Shah*' or 'Nanak the Divine Faqir'.

In a short time the Guru came to be visited by people from the neighbouring villages. The Guru's message of liberation from the snares of superstitions, forms, and ceremonies, encouraged and enforced by *Pandits* and *Mullas*, was heartily welcomed by the people, Hindus and Muslims alike. This perturbed these persons, who lived on the religious offerings of the populace. They felt that the Guru was undermining their position as custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge; for he was teaching that everybody could be his own priest and worship God without the intercession of *Pandits* and *Mullas*. They feared that their means of livelihood, comfortable, the plenteous, would be destroyed. So they jointly conspired to force the Guru to leave the place. They began to poison the ears of Malik Bhago, who was Khatri by caste and a servile and corrupt steward of Zalim Khan, the *Pathan*, who owned Saidpur.

1. That place is now the site of a Gurdwara called *Rori Sahib* or the Sacred Pebbles. It is said to have been ruined by Pakistanis.

However, for a time the Guru was not molested. More and more people were coming to listen to his sacred songs and divine, soul-inspiring discourses. At last, something occurred which gave Malik Bhago an excuse to molest the Guru. Now it so happened that Malik Bhago was giving a grand sacrificial feast. He wanted that all religious and holy men, all Brahmins and *Sadhus* in that place, should join and partake of his repast to enable him to acquire merit. He had been told that a saint was staying at the house of Lalo, the carpenter. He sent a servant to invite the Guru along with his followers. The Guru refused to accept the invitation. He had no taste, said he, for the sumptuous but bloodstained articles of diet which would be served at Bhago's sacrificial feast.

The Brahmins found their opportunity. They said to the proud and haughty Malik, 'So you see ! This person, whom people call a *tapa* or hermit and who belongs to a high caste, is really a heretic of the worst type. He ignores the *Varna Dharma*. He dines with a *Shudra*. He has scornfully declined your invitation. He has scoffed at you. He has said that your dainties are interfused with blood. This is a grave insult, black infamy, and dark heresy. This is too much. He deserves chastisement.'

Malik Bhago felt disappointed and insulted-disappointed at the Guru's refusal to partake of the sacrificial feast and insulted at the words accompanying the refusal. He believed that this '*yagg*' or sacrificial feast would be incomplete unless all holy men in the locality graced his house. He sent his man again to bring the Guru. But the Guru again declined the invitation, saying, 'What has a *Faqir* to do at the house of a high official ? I don't want to partake of his sumptuous dinner. Why should he insist on my participation ?' The Malik's wrath was excited. He sent a batch of footmen to bring the Guru into his presence, using force, if necessary. When they disclosed their errand to the Guru, he smiled and said, 'All right, friends. The Lord's work has to be done; the sooner, the better. Go and tell your master that I am coming to do my duty.'

The Malik was waiting for him with impatience. The Guru went and stood calm and quiet. Bhago had been resolving to pounce upon the Guru in wrath. But a look at the Master's countenance sent a strange quiver through his body. The fire in his soul got cooled. He addressed the Guru respectfully. He remonstrated with him for his lodging and dining with low-caste people and his refusing an invitation to a *Brahmbhoj* or feast given in the name of

God by a high-caste Hindu. Above all, he resented the Guru's remarks that the Malik's dainties were interfused with blood.

The Guru heard him out calmly. Then he said, 'Misguided brother, to invite all to your feast was certainly your duty and you did that; but to enforce acceptance of the invitation does not become you. We *Sadhus* eschew delicacies. We eat what the Bounteous Lord sends us in His mercy. As for my remarks about the nature of the food served at your feast, I said what I felt. For fear of no man shall I be kept from speaking out the truth. Dainties and comforts which you had by tyrannizing over the labouring poor are verily interfused with the blood of the unfortunate victims. All your wealth has been extorted mercilessly from the poor toilers of the *Ilaqa*. Enjoyment of this ill-gotten wealth cannot but engender low passions and evil tendencies in the heart and mind, and produce pain and disease in the body. Hence I shunned your feast.'

Malik Bhago felt the justice of the Guru's frank and bold remarks. But his attendants, dependants and friends were all gathered there. He would not own defeat so easily. So he said, 'If the food served by a high-caste man like me you deem to be unfit for you, how can you go on taking the food prepared by that *Shudra*, whose very touch defiles the twice-born ? His coarse bread doesn't contain milk and mine does not contain blood, or does it ?'

'Yes', replied the Guru, 'Lalo's coarse bread is interfused with milk and honey. The earnings of a pious man, obtained with the sweat of the brow, are pure; the food supplied by such pious workers and labourers is sweet and nourishing like milk and honey. It sustains the body and lifts the soul. Whereas the dainties which are obtained by exploiting and tyrannizing over the poor and the weak, are verily interfused with the blood of the unfortunate victims. Such food harms the body and tarnishes the soul. I would have none of it.'

At this Malik Bhago flew into a rage. The Guru said, 'Don't wax angry. There should be no compulsion in such matters. All right, if you insist on my partaking of your feast, let me have some food cooked for distribution at your house.'

The Guru asked Lalo also to fetch a piece of bread from his own house. By this time a large crowd had gathered around the Guru including the *Nawab* himself. When the food from the two houses was brought, the Guru took

Lalo's coarse bread in his right hand and some rich food from Bhago's house in his left hand. He squeezed them both, holding his hands high so that all could see. From Lalo's bread oozed out drops of milk and from Bhago's rich food issued forth drops of blood.

'Now you see,' said the Guru, 'why I refused to eat your food. Lalo's bread has been obtained by honest labour and is pure. He enjoys what he earns by hard labour and shares his earnings with others; whereas your food has been obtained by bribery, oppression, and exploitation, and is, therefore, impure and blood-stained, it is like carrion. Remember, to take away by deceit or force what by right belongs to another is, for the Hindus, like eating beef, and for the Muslims, like eating pork; whatever is forbidden by religion cannot become permissible by being seasoned with spices.¹ Similarly, whatever has been obtained by depriving others of their rightful dues or possessions, through deceit or oppression, is like the forbidden food; it cannot become pure and permissible by giving out some of it in charity or using it in feasting Brahmins and *Sadhus*. People who live on such carrion cannot expect any mercy from God. You are ruining your future. Remember, wealth cannot be amassed without adopting sinful means, and it accompanies not its owner when he goes from this world.² Take heed in time.'

Malik Bhago's pride was humbled. Scales fell from his eyes. He realized that he had been leading a sinful life. All the same, he remonstrated with the Guru at his associating and boarding with low-caste people and ignoring the rules of conduct for the highcastes. The Guru's reply was in the form of the following lines from his hymns :-

'Truly low-caste men are they
Who forget the Lord;
Without meditation on the Supreme Lord, O Nanak,
Man becomes low and despicable, a mean outcaste.'

Rag Asa.

'Recognize the Divine Spark which illumines every human form.
Raise no question of caste or tribe;

1. Guru Nanak. *Var Majh*.

2. Guru Nanak, *Rag Asa*.

For, in the Holy court of the Father above,
There exist no distinctions of caste or creed. '

Rag Asa.

'Castes and the distinctions based on them
Are but the idle inventions of evil brains.
All men, all creatures, are under the protecting shade of the Supreme Lord.
All who deem and call themselves to be great and pure
Will be really so, if, in the court of God, they are found to be worthy of
honour.

Var Sri Rag.

'My misguided brother,' added the Guru, 'do not pride thyself on thy high caste. Despise no man. God dwells in every heart. The Divine spark, the immortal soul, inspires every human form. All are equally the children of the Father above. Birth in this or that family cannot exalt or degrade a man. It is actions that do so. A good, pious man of humble birth is far more precious dear to God and men of God than a high-born tyrant or evil-doer. Service of mankind and honest bodily labour do not degrade a man. They elevate him. As for me :-

'People who are lowliest among the lowly,
Of a caste that is deemed the lowest of low castes-
All such are the friends and brothers of Nanak.
What has he to do with the high and the great ?
Where the lowly are treated with a loving care,
There do rain Your Mercy and Grace, O Lord.'

Sri Rag.

The discourse of the Master, interspersed with his matchless divine songs, went straight to the heart of the hearers. Malik Bhago was subdued. Scales fell off his eyes and he fell at the Master's feet. A strange thrill entered at his forehead, which had touched the feet of the Master, and passed through his whole body. He begged to be forgiven his hideous past. He prayed for life and light. The Guru bade him rise and sin no more. Malik Bhago rose a changed man. There was a new light in his eyes; a joy unknown ever before filled his heart and thrilled his soul. The Guru blessed him with the priceless gift of the Name and a life of love and service. The Malik went home, light in body and heart. He distributed all his wealth among the poor. He vowed, thenceforth, to

live a life of productive useful activity, of love, devotion, and service. Bhai Lalo, whom he had erstwhile despised as a low-caste man, he began to deem his elder brother and dearest friend.

Thus did the Guru lift the lowly unto eminence. Thus did he destroy the pride of caste which was degrading and demoralizing the people. Thus did he lay the foundation and of his Holy Fellowship where 'the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hope.'

Bhai Lalo was appointed to the first *Manji*, which was to spread Sikhism in the Northern Panjab.

A few days later, Mardana returned from Talwandi. He delivered to the Guru the humble request of his old disciple, Rai Bular, that the Guru might be pleased to visit him. 'I am old,' he had said, 'and too weak to go to him. He is kind and gracious. I would that I could see him with these eyes; for soon they will close for ever.' Other disciples of Talwandi had also sent their entreaties. So, after a short further stay of Syedpur, the Guru started towards the place of his birth.

CHAPTER 15

TALWANDI AND TULAMBA

On reaching Talwandi, he took his seat outside the village. His parents heard of his arrival. They went to see him. His uncle, Mehta Lalu, also accompanied them. They once again tried to persuade him to give up the life of renunciation which he had chosen, and take to family life and to some profitable occupation, e.g. agriculture or trade. The Guru listened to all that they said and replied, 'The whole world is my family now. I have not renounced the world. I have given myself to it, I have chosen a really profitable calling; one which is to give me untold riches of peace and happiness, both here and hereafter. More, it will be the means of bringing the misguided, impoverished humanity to a realization and enjoyment of the infinite treasures which it can make its own, but which it has lost and forgotten. I am an agriculturist as well. The human heart is my field. The Eternal Name and infinite Love are the seeds that I sow. I am a trader, too. I deal in the souls of men. Procuring the precious commodities of Truth, Love, and the Name, from the Bounteous Lord of treasures, I dole them out to those who need them. But I don't throw away my precious goods. I sell them very dear, indeed. Those who would have these must hand over their own selves to me. I then knit them on to the feet of the Lord. I buy human souls and hand them over to the Lord. So, try not to dissuade me from such a useful calling. Rather, bid me prosper in my business.'¹

Words as these, made his parents and relatives hold their peace and let

1. Cf. the Guru's Divine Song is translated below :-

If you wish to play this game to love
Put your head on your palm,
With a heart resolute and calm,
Steadily follow me on this way.
This path of Love if you would tread,
Be ready, O dear.
Sans Wavering or fear,
In perfect joy, to lay down your head.

him follow his own course. The Guru then got up and went to the house of Rai Bular. The Rai was an old man by now. He rose and was about to fall on the Guru's feet, when the latter held him in his loving arms. The Rai hugged the Guru lovingly to his breast. In that embrace of love, the Rai tasted true and lasting joy. He felt himself to be light as air and happy as the bride that has found her lord after a long separation.

The Guru stayed a few days at Talwandi. Disciples and friends of his childhood and youth gathered around him. He rekindled their souls. He awakened them from dreamy sleep of mundane greedy, tenacious, worldly life, and made them taste the pleasures of an active, wakeful life of the spirit. During day-time he remained with his relatives and friends, chiefly with Rai Bular. At night, he would retire into the solitude of the forest, where his collected soul enjoyed unbroken communion with the Lord.

After a few days he got ready to depart. The divine Call which had lured him from Sultanpur, was urging him on to give up the restful life. He started. Mardana was with him. Crossing the river Ravi, he travelled southwards through forests and little inhabited tracts. But he did halt near hamlets and villages in order to deliver his message to the people there. Neither hunger nor fatigue seemed to affect the Guru. He seemed to be possessed and drawn by some invisible, irresistible force. He seemed to be in a hurry. Some good bargain was up again. Mardana felt the pangs of hunger and fatigue. He bravely bore them for some time. The fruits that could be picked up or plucked from here and there, on the way, were not enough to satisfy his body's craving for food. He wanted bread and milk.

By then they had reached the neighbourhood of Harappa. The Guru permitted Mardana to go into the village, assuring him of a hospitable reception. Mardana went. People treated him with kindness and charity. They feasted him on dainties. They made him offerings of money and clothes. Towards evening, Mardana gathered up the offerings into a bundle and took them to the Guru. When the latter saw Mardana, with the bundle on his head, he laughed loud and long. 'What is it, Mardana?' asked he. 'Clothes and money, Master,' replied Mardana. The good people offered them to me and I have brought them for you.'

The Guru replied, 'But these things are of no use to us. We have renounced all worldly wealth and taken to this life. Shall we let ourselves be

encumbered again? Throw them away. Let the poor and the needy have these things. He, in whose service we are, will look to our needs. Lovers of God have relish for naught but the True Name. They want nothing else. They feel a constant craving for singing the praises of the Bounteous Lord. His thought sustains them ever. Let faith in Him grow in the heart. Throw these things away.' Mardana obeyed.

The Guru then explained the disastrous effects of offerings on laymen. 'Offerings,' said he, 'are like poison and cannot be digested. They can be digested only by fervent adoration of God at all hours. When man performs scant worship and depends on offering for his subsistence, the effect on him is as if he had taken poison.'

The two started again and soon reached near Tulamba in the modern district of Multan, Pakistan. Five or six furlongs from the present railway station of Mukhdumpur on the Khanewal-Shorekot line, there was the habitation of a notorious *thug* named Sajjan. To all appearances he was a holy man. He dressed himself in pure, spotless white, put on a *tilak* mark on his forehead like Hindu men of religion, wore a rosary round his neck like Muhammadan *faqirs*, and carried a pilgrim's staff in his hand. He called himself a Sheikh. He had built, side by side, a temple for the Hindus and a mosque for the Muslims. His habitation was a spacious building in which he provided food and lodgings to travellers. When night came on, he dismissed his guests to sleep. He and his men fell upon his unsuspecting guests at night, relieved them of their valuables, and threw their bodies into a secret well in which they perished. 'Next morning he would take up a pilgrim's staff and a rosary, and spread out a carpet to pray in the true spirit of an ancient Pharisee'. He intended to play the same trick on Guru Nanak and his companion.

At the gate of Sajjan's mansion stood two servants ever on the look out for guests and wayfarers. They welcomed the Guru and his companion. The radiance born of spiritual grandeur which lit the Guru's countenance was taken by them to be due to consciousness of great worldly wealth. The two were led to a cosy, well-furnished room. But the Guru took his seat on the floor. Sajjan also came there. Greatly imposing were the dress and mien of this imposter. He was glad; for he believed that the Guru had with him some priceless gems. All that wealth would be his before day-break.

With ostensible humility, Sajjan seated himself at the Guru's feet. He tried to fish out information about the sort of wealth which the Guru had with him. When asked his name, Sajjan replied, 'I am a friend and humble servant of all. Hindus call me Sajjan Mall and Muslims call me Sheikh Sajjan. But I am neither a Hindu nor a Muhammadan. Rather, I am both in one.'

Servants brought food and drink for the two. The Guru declined to have anything. Sajjan and his accomplices tried all their arts, but failed to persuade the Guru to take either food or drink. Mardana, of course, could not eat or drink without his Master's permission. Sajjan then took them to a room where cosy beds had been prepared for them. The Guru sat on the floor here too. Sajjan begged him with folded hands to lie on the bed and take rest for the night. The Guru smiled and said, "No, friend; cosy, soft beds are not for us *faqirs*. I am all right where I am. Duty has to be done. Time for rest is not yet. Go and rest, if you can."

Sajjan bowed and went away. He assembled his confederates. All thought out ways and means of plundering the Guru's wealth. They did not know that the Guru had come to give arm loads of his really precious, peerless wealth to them, who were really paupers possessing thousands. It was decided to strangle the two in the small hours of the morning. Sajjan retired to his bedroom. He was yet lying awake, immersed in thought, when he heard sweet music coming from the Guru's room. It charmed him out of his bed. He quietly stole to the door of the Guru's room. He saw that the Guru was sitting with his eyes closed. There was a 'sparkle of innumerable gems on his forehead.' Strange, soothing, fascinating emanations seemed to be radiating from his person. Mardana was playing on the rebeck and singing one of the Master's sacred Songs. The music and the Song and the look on the Guru's face drew him in as if with some strong, invisible chains. He went quietly in. An atmosphere of soothing calm and attunement filled the room. He bowed, partly as a matter of show that was in his nature, and partly on account of a mysterious force which he could as little resist as explain or understand.

After a while Mardana stopped singing. The music on the rebeck continued. It was finding its way to the heart of Sajjan and beginning to purge it of its filth. The Guru then lifted his sweet, melodious voice and sang the following Divine Song, which described the characteristics of imposters and

criminals like Sajjan and depicted their ultimate doom :-

'Bronze is bright and shining ; but if I were to rub it, its sable blackness do appear,
Which even a hundred washings cannot remove.

Real Sajjans or friends 'are they who accompany me when I depart from here,
And, when the account is called for, they stand by me.

Houses, mansions, palaces, painted on all sides,
When hollow within, are as it were, crumbled and useless.

Hérons, arrayed in white, dwell at places of pilgrimage;

Yet they rend and devour living things, and, therefore, should not be called white or
pure.

My body is like the simmal-tree; men beholding me mistake me for what I am not.²
Its fruit is useless ; my body, too, possesseth only such qualities.

I am like a blind man carrying a burden, while the path is mountainous and long.

I need eyes which I cannot get; how can I climb and traverse the journey ?

Of what avail are services, virtues, and all sorts of cleverness?

Nanak, remember the Name, so that you may be released from your shackles.'

Rag Suhi.

As the deep-penetrating notes of the moving, divine song followed each other in a sweet cadence, the heart of Sajjan, which had been callous and cruel and devoid of all softer feelings, began to melt in deep anguish of the soul, to throb in anxiety, to flutter in fear. All his dark deeds stood stark before him. He tightly shut his eyes but they still stared him in the face. A heavy burden, as of big, heavy, countless loads, seemed to be pressing on him and crushing his soul.

A deep, dark abyss appeared to be yawning him, ready to swallow and efface him. He was convinced that the Guru had read, like an open book, his foul mind and vicious heart. He stood up. With a faltering, unsteady step, and moist, downcast eyes, he approached the Guru and clung to his feet. A thrill passed through his whole frame. A current as of electricity seemed to have entered at his hands and forehead. The burden on his heart and soul was

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1. Here there is a pun on the word *sajjan*. It means a friend. It was also the thug's name.
 2. Like birds which peck at what they suppose to be the fruit of the simmal tree, but find it to be no fruit at all.

becoming lighter and lighter. He washed the Guru's feet with tears of repentance and sorrow.

He remained long in that posture. Then the Guru smiled, passed his hand over the back and shoulders of Sajjan, and bade him rise. The touch of the Guru's hand sent another thrill through his body. He had no heart to rise. He wanted to lie for ever at the blissful feet of the Master. So he tarried. The Guru held him by the hand the hand which had administered cups of poison to and cut the throats of innumerable unsuspecting wayfarers lured to this den by the prospect of a night's rest and lodgings. Sajjan let go the Guru's feet and sat up with folded hands and streaming eyes. The Guru's Song had washed him clean. He was filled with remorse. He begged the Guru to forgive him, to save him, to deliver him from the consequences of his sins. The Guru said, 'Sheikh Sajjan, there is no cause for despair; for God is merciful and reads the heart. At the throne of God grace is obtained by two things; open confession and reparation for wrong. You must truly repent and reform your life.' Sajjan said, 'Tell me and I will do what you bid me.' 'You must recall all the wrongs you have done, one by one, and then repent from the depth of your heart. Repentance is not the mere repeating of a formula; it is recognition of wrong and driving out tendencies that lead to wrong-doing. Come, truly state how many murders you have committed, what foul deeds you have perpetrated.' Sajjan admitted long catalogue of most heinous crimes. 'I confess', added he, 'to my utter shame that, in the false guise of a devotee, I have been robbing and killing all who came to me for shelter. Tell me, O Saint of God, how I am to expiate for my sins and crimes'. The Guru said, 'Bring out all the property of your victims that you have retained in your possession.' Sajjan did so at once. The Guru told him to give it all to the poor. Sajjan gladly obeyed the Guru's orders and became a disciple of the Guru after receiving *Charan Pahul* or *Charnamrit*.¹

The Guru blessed him with the Name of the Lord. He bade him make his house a *dharmshala*, or a house of worship and devotion, of open-

1. A form of initiation by drinking the water in which the Guru's feet had been washed or which had been touched by the Guru with his foot. The preamble of the *Japuji* was read at the same time. This form of initiation prevailed till Guru Gobind Singh replaced it by *Khande-da Amrit*, for which see the writer's *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*.

handed charity, and active, all-embracing love and service. He instructed him in the fundamentals of his Faith and charged him with the duty of reclaiming others. He bade him earn his living by honest labour, meditate on the Lord every moment of his life, and share his earnings with the needy and the poor. Thus would he be a true *sajjan* or friend, not only of himself, but also of all mankind. From a *thug* or robber, Sajjan became a holy, active servant of God and man, the first Sikh missionary appointed by the Guru for the propagation of his religion. It was thus that Guru Nanak made converts to his faith.

‘The criminal’s den, thus became a temple for God’s worship. It was the first Dharmshala or Sikh Gurdwara established by the Guru with Sajjan as a missionary to spread his master’s gospel in the South and West.’

CHAPTER 16

AT PAKPATTAN

DISCOURSE WITH SHEIKH BRAHM

Leaving Sajjan to follow the path shown to him, and charging him with the duty of reclaiming others, the Guru turned towards the east. Travelling by short stages and preaching his message to the people in all places, he reached Pakpattan, then called Ajodhan, in the southern part of the Panjab, now in Pakistan. There he proceeded to visit the shrine of Sheikh Farid, a renowned Muslim *Faqir*. A saint named Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim) was then the incumbent of the shrine. On reaching there, the Guru learnt that Sheikh Brahm, or Sheikh Farid II, was out in the woods, doing severe penance in order to acquire religious merit and obtain a glimpse of the Lord. We have seen that it was the Guru's wont to seek out men who were either engrossed too deeply in vicious pleasures of the world, in utter forgetfulness of the higher needs of their souls, or were too much absorbed in painful, misguided attempts at emancipation of their souls, torturing and starving their bodies in hopes of winning salvation, and neglecting altogether their duties as men towards their fellow-beings. He would meet them, discuss things with them, throw light on their inner selves, and give them such an impression of life, of love, of divine beauty and goodness, of moral endeavour and excellence, that all which they had till then regarded as of paramount importance lost all significance, receded into the shade, and they had no longer the will or desire to think, feel, or do, save as he would have them do. Lighting thus a holy flame within their selves, he deciphered them to themselves and set them steady on the path of balanced growth of the body, mind, and soul.

The tale of the severe, voluntary suffering undergone by the Sheikh induced the Guru to find him out and show him the right and glorious way to attain his goal. He met him in the thick of a deep forest, far away from human habitations. On seeing the Guru, whom he knew to be a religious man, dressed in secular costume like an ordinary householder, he said :-

'Either seek for high position or for God,
Put not your feet on two boats, lest you should be drowned and your goods be
lost.'

By this he meant that one should lead either secular or religious life. He
should not combine both. It was impossible for a householder to find God.
The Guru replied :-

'Put your feet on both boats and your goods also on the two.'¹
One boat may sink, but the other shall cross over.²
For me there is no water, no boat, no wreck, and no loss;
For the True One, O Nanak, is my wealth and property,
And He is spontaneously everywhere contained.'

The Sheikh thereupon referred to the dangers and obstacles besetting
the path recommended by the Guru: the infatuation which the world's allure-
ments or *Maya* may exercise and thus obstruct the seeker's progress towards
God realization : He said :-

'O Farid, the world is enamoured of the witch³, who is found to be false when her
secret is known.

Nanak, while you looks on, the field⁴ is ruined.'

In reply the Guru said :-

O Farid, love for the witch has prevailed from the very beginning. Nanak, the field
shall not be ruined if the watchman be ever on the alert.

'*Maya* is as old as the world. It is not an absolute evil. It can be
yoked to good purpose. When a person takes refuge in God, *maya* will
cease to exercise its evil sway over his heart. Hence, what is needed is not
to run away from *maya*'s domain, but to make it sub-servient to one's will.
There is no need to run away from home and turn a mendicant. What is

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1. That is, enjoy the world and also remember God, remain a householder and be a man of religion, simultaneously.
 2. The body may perish, but the soul shall be saved; the love of God will save one from being too much engrossed in worldly entanglements, and the love of family with the responsibilities it entails will prevent one from renouncing the world altogether.
 3. Worldly love, mammon or *maya*.
 4. Man's body

needed is to love and serve God and man at the same time. The human personality cannot become complete unless the mundane and the mystic, the worldly and the religious, aspects of life are advanced equally and simultaneously.'

The Sheikh now thought of his old age and his failure to achieve union with or realization of God. He feared it might be too late for him to reach that goal. Was it possible, he wanted to know, to realize God even at that age or was the game lost for ever? So he spoke in remorse, addressing the words to himself :-

'When it was the time to make a raft or build a boat,¹ thou failed to do so.

When the sea becomes full and stormy², it will be difficult to cross over.

Touch not the safflower, or thy hand will get burnt³, my dear.

On the one side the bride (soul) is weak, and, on the other, the spouse's orders are strict and hard.⁴

Just as the milk once extracted cannot re-enter the teats, similarly if a man wastes his life, he will not get another chance for a union with the Lord.

Saith Farid, O my companions, the spouse will call us all.

The soul shall depart in sadness and the body shall become a heap of dust.'

Farid, *Rag Suhi*.

To this the Guru replied in the same measure but in a most optimistic tone :-

'Make a raft of devotion and self-discipline; the crossing shall then be quick and comfortable;

The path shall then become so smooth and easy, as if the sea (of passions) did not exist, and there were no overflowing and no storm.

O Lord, Your name is the madder which hath imparted a never-fading hue to my robe.⁵

Friends are on their way to the Beloved. How will union with Him be achieved?

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1. That is, to worship and meditate on God.
 2. That is, when human passions are aroused and get beyond control.
 3. That is, passionate pleasures may look as bright and fascinating as the safflower with its resplendant colour, yet in reality they are like fire in their power to burn and destroy those who approach them.
 4. That is, man is weak by nature, but God has set him a hard task.
 5. My whole being is permeated with Thy Name and has acquired immutable qualities.

If they possess virtue,. He will, of His own accord, effect their union with Himself.

When once united with the devotee, he will never part from him, provided the union be really effected.

It is the True One that puts an end to the round of births and deaths.

She who has got rid of egoism has sewn a robe arrayed in which to meet the Bridegroom.

Through the Guru's instruction she has obtained her reward in the sweet ambrosial words of her Lord.

Nanak says, O my companions, the Lord is thoroughly dear.

We are His slaves, true is our Lord.'

Rag Suhi.

The Sheikh Brahm then recited the following hymn in the *Rag Asa* measure :-

'They who cherish heart-felt love for God are true;

They who have one thing in their hearts and quite another on their lips are accounted false.

Those who are imbued with the love of God remain ever intoxicated with the sight of Him;

They who forget God's Name become a burden to the earth.

They alone are true *faqirs* at His gate who have been their advent into the world.

O Cherisher, You are illimitable, unapproachable, and endless.

I kiss the feet of those who have recognized the Truth.

O God, I have come for shelter at Your feet; You are art the Forgiver *Par excellence*.

Grant your devotion as charity to Sheikh Farid.'

On this the Guru uttered the following hymn called *Suchajji*¹, in the *Rag Suhi* measure :

'When you are with me, I have everything:

For You, O Lord, are my capital-stock.

In You I dwell in peace; when You are in me, I gain applause.

If it pleases You, You bestow throne and greatness.

If it pleases you, You makes man a forlorn beggar.

1. Woman or wife endowed with wisdom and virtue.

If it pleases you, rivers flow over dry land, and the lotus blooms in the heavens.¹

If it pleases you, man crosses the world's ocean;

If it pleases you, he is drowned therein,

If it pleases you, You appears to me as my merry Spouse,

And I get absorbed in Your praises, O Lord of excellences.

If it pleases you, You appears to me as terrific, O my Lord,

And I am undone in going round the cycle of births and deaths.

O Lord, You are unapproachable and incomparable;

When attempting a full description of You, my powers fail and I feel exhausted.

When can I ask of Thee ? What can I say to Thee?

I hunger and thirst for a sight of Thee.

Under the Guru's instructions I have obtained the Lord;

Nanak's prayer has been granted.'

The Guru answered Sheikh Brahm's all questions, removed all his doubts, and resolved all his problems. They then left the forest and started towards the Sheikh's place. At one place, during this journey, some people brought them bread. While the Guru accepted it readily, the Sheikh declined it, saying that he had dined already. The people felt annoyed that their offerings were thus spurned. They said, 'You must be a liar from that country where Farid, who wore a wooden cake on his stomach, held religious sway. Whenever any one offered him food, he used to say what you have said.' The rebuke went home. He was sorry for having told such a lie a number of times. He threw away the wooden bread. The Guru was pleased. He exhorted him to be of good cheer and added, 'Sheikh Brahm, God is in thee. Look for Him within. Don't starve yourself. The body and soul must both be kept healthy and strong. Starve not the body, cripple not the soul. Desert not the world, but renounce not religious life either. Who knows which of them may be acceptable to God? High position and wealth are not evil in themselves. They are a blessing when used in the service of God through man. They give peace and happiness to those who are low and lacking, and elevate those who use them for the good of humanity. But high position are a curse when they are employed for the oppression of the weak and the poor. They then bring misery to those who

1. If it may please Him, dry, devotion-less hearts may overflow with love and devotion.

lack them, and degrade and demoralize those who have and misuse them. This *maya*, this longing for the world, has been here from the very beginning. It is indispensable for a proper performance of the drama which the Lord sets. His creatures to play on the world's stage. But one need not fear this ancient witch. If one keeps alert, one can so elevate or sublimate this longing for the world as to help oneself on the way to the Lord. Besides, this *maya* will not leave you wherever you may go. It will assail you in diverse beguiling forms. So why flee from it ? Why not use it for fulfilment of the soul's longing for union with the Infinite ? Why not develop and expand this longing into an active, all-embracing love ? This body is not a vain encumbrance for the soul, to be starved and got rid of, the sooner, the better. It is the vehicle of the soul. It is the horse, and the soul is the rider. It will not do to ignore or starve the one or the other. Both must be kept in a fit condition of this pilgrimage on this earth is to lead us to the true ideal and goal of humanity. By its means man can raise himself, torture the body as to forget all care for the soul. Both are essential. Use both of them in the service of God. Employ thy ever in union with the Lord, and direct thy body in its path of Love, Service, and Devotion. This is the way that leads to the Lord.'

Sheikh Brahm heard all this mute admiration. He was convinced and converted. He broke his several days' fast at the bidding of the Guru. For some days more the Guru remained with him and fed his famished soul on Divine Songs. When the Guru got ready to move further on, the Sheikh took leave to return to Pakpattan. We shall see that, later on, the Guru visited him again at that place to see if he was living up to the teachings imparted to him in the woods.

While staying with Sheikh Brahm, the Guru copied out the holy compositions of Sheikh Farid. They were later included in Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev.

CHAPTER 17

TOUR TO THE EAST : AT KURKSHETRA

After having visited all these places in Punjab, the Guru decided to proceed on long tours to places outside the Punjab. These tours are called *Udasis*.

There is a good deal of difference about the order in which these tours were undertaken. But the most generally accepted view is that the first tour was to the east, the second to the south, the third to the north, and the fourth to the west.

So we take it that the first tour was to the east. Mardana was his companion during this tour. During it the Guru visited important centres of Hindu religion. With a view to addressing his message of light and love to as many people at a time as possible, he visited the holy places on festive occasions. His method of approach was 'dramatic rather than discussional'. In order to draw the people's attention, he wore a peculiar dress. Then, on reaching among the throng of pilgrims, he proceeded to do something which was not only extraordinary and out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere, but also such as the worshippers would notice at once and denounce. He would then gently turn the tables on his critics, convince them of their error, and show them the true way to worship God.

During his first tour, he wore a strange motley dress, consisting of a long ochre-coloured gown, with a white waisted-band, a conical cap in his head, a garland of bones round his neck, a pair of shoes of different designs on his feet; and a saffron mark on his forehead.¹ Who could fail to notice such a one ? With such dress, there was no need for him to advertise his presence.

The first important centre of Hindu religion visited by him was Khurkshetra or Kurkshetra. He knew that a big Hindu fair was about to be held there on the occasion of the solar-eclipse. He also knew what superstitions practices regarding the eclipse were current among the Hindus. He knew how

1. *Puratan Janam Sakhi*. p. 43.

on such occasions the simple, ignorant people turn all from such senseless practices and bring them on to the right path.

Reaching there, he sat beside a lake. People were busy in bathing and giving alms to Brahmins. They hoped, thereby, to clean themselves of their sins and to rescue the Sun-god from the clutches of demons; for they had been taught by the priests to believe that the solar-eclipse was caused by demons *Rahu* and *Ketu*-by taking the sun in their grip. If they were to succeed in engulfing and destroying the sun, the world would be plunged in darkness. Therefore, to ward off that danger people had to gather and pray at that sacred place, and give gifts to Brahmins. The Guru watched these deluded, misguided people and smiled. He bade Mardana play the rebeck. The Guru sang one of his sweet, soul-stirring Songs. Very few heard him; for all were busy in washing off their sins and in rescuing the Sun-god.

At that time a queen and her son came along. The radiance on the Guru's face charmed them. They bowed and offered him the only thing which they could offer, a deer which the prince had shot on the way. They prayed that the Guru might intercede for them and pray for the restoration of their kingdom, which had been usurped by another. The Guru said, 'All is in God's hands. Remember Him and live in contentment under whatever condition He is pleased to ordain. I am sure that your love and devotion will win His pleasure and get you back what you have lost. I shall also pray for you.'

At the Guru's instructions, the deer was cut up and the venison set to boil in a big vessel. The smoke of the fire attracted the notice of the Brahmins and the rest. They had a superstition that to light a fire and cook anything during the solar-eclipse were acts of sacrilege. They were beside themselves with rage. They hurried to the spot. When they learnt that, of all things, it was meat that was on the fire, they yelled all the louder. This was a sacrilege which had never been committed there before, and on such a day when the Sun-God was harassed by his enemies. Some said that he was a great sinner, some called him an irreligious atheist intent upon violating established usage, others considered him to be a man of low birth who was trying to spoil the sanctity of the place and the occasion by his irreligious acts. They were all furious, They forgot their own acts of worship and charity. All yelled with rage. They swarmed around the Guru. They threat-

ened him, abused him, jeered and swore at him. They were ready to stone him. The Guru sat calm and unperturbed. As they approached him, a smile of benevolent pity at their foolish behaviour overspread his countenance. When they saw the winsome smile on that calm, God-lit face, their heated brains began to cool, their wrath-agitated hearts began to throb less violently. Soon, all thoughts of violence left them. They came near him and began to question him about his queer conduct. They were not yet quite free from agitation. The Guru invited them to sit and discuss the matter calmly. They sat down around him. At their head was *Pandit* Nanu, who was very proud of his learning. He started a discussion on the question of meat eating. The Guru replied to Nanu's questions in a Divine Song which may be freely rendered as follows:-

'Your scruples against meat are based on a misconception. While you are too ready to wrangle about meat, you really do not know what meat is, how it differs from vegetables, and in what do sin and evil lie. Man is like all other animals in having a body of flesh. It is in flesh and from flesh that this body comes into being. For nine months It is nourished in flesh. After birth, man sucks flesh for milk. On growing to manhood, he marries and brings home a bundle of flesh. He derives enjoyment from that bundle of flesh, his wife, and produces children, who are again but so many pieces of flesh. So flesh in itself is not a contemptible thing. If it is evil to take meat, well, what will you say of your *Rishis* and gods of old, who used to kill animals and perform religious ceremonies therewith ? How then can you take objection against my cooking meat on an occasion of religious sanctity? In your *Vedas* and *Shastras* meat is mentioned quite often and is not forbidden. How then can you defend your fanaticism against meat ?

'The truth is that though you call yourselves clever and learned persons, yet, in reality, you are wholly devoid of true wisdom and knowledge. As I said before, your scruples against meat are due to a misconception. Let us consider the matter from another point of view. Man is like all other animals in having a body which needs food and sustenance ; but he is higher than the rest in having a greatly developed mind and intellect. It is open to man to direct his mind towards the source of all life, light, and happiness, to sublimate his passions and instincts, acquire qualities that can raise him to the level of gods, and thereby attain a life of real power and bliss. In that state he raises no

idle questions about animal or vegetable diet. He does not live to eat, but eats to live. He uses his god-given sense of discrimination, and avoids such articles of food and clothing as are likely to sow and tendencies, or as are prone to produce disease and suffering in the body. He lives in constant contemplation of God . He finds Him, and hence loves and serves Him, in his creation.

'On the other hand, it is open to man to let his mind get more entangled in the meshes of animal cravings. He then runs about like a wild beast. He lives to eat. His mind goes dancing about after objects of sensual pleasures. He becomes spiritually dead. He eats and drinks as his depraved animal nature prompts him. He suffers and dies, not as a man, but as the wreck of a man.

'Then there are others who cultivate their intellect in order to indulge in vain controversies, dry philosophies, and blind superstitions. They do not direct their thoughts to God. They can never taste true like of the spirit. Look at yourselves. You believe that by bathing and giving alms and charity to Brahmins, a man can wash his sins away and rescue the Sun-god from the clutches of some imaginary demons. What an idle occupation ! What a silly thought ! Your hearts are impure as ever. How can bathing wash away your sins ? The sun is at a huge distance, How can people of this planet help him, with their offerings to Brahmins or in any other manner ? The eclipse is a natural phenomenon. Brahmins have made it a means of duping the people and relieving them of their substance; a strange religion ! a stange piety ! You boast of your abstension from meat and count it an act of great merit and piety, but you never think of eradicating the evils which defile your mind and heart. You think it a sin to eat flesh, but you think it no sin to suck other people's blood, to snatch other people's rights, to commit adultery and a thousand other black and evils deeds. You believe that those who take meat are sinners ; yet you accept gifts from those very sinner and deceive yourselves by the thought that your avoidance of meat will save you from going to hell, where your benefactors are doomed to go. Isn't it a queer philosophy ?

'Give up these idle controversies. Think ever of the true Lord, who is the source of all life and power, of all peace and happiness, Cultivate the nobler and higher powers and qualities; employ them in the service of God through man; control you thoughts from wandering in sinful channels; direct them to the source of all knowledge. Do not suppress and kill your natural animal caraving for love, life, and sustenance. Rather elevate them and har-

ness them to the service of God and man. Do not torture and disable your body. It is the vehicle of the soul. Keep it strong and healthy. Use it in the path of righteousness. You will come to enjoy true life of the spirit. You will perceive God pervading everywhere. You will be one with that source of all life, light, love and power. You will cease to be dry, dead, and weak. Unbounded love, light, and power will outflow from you and help and raise mankind. So think of Him.’¹

‘Remember’, added to Guru, ‘only such food should be avoided as may tend to produce pain and disorder in the body or evil thoughts and vicious longings in the mind. That is to be the golden rule in deciding what to eat and what to abstain from.’

At the conclusion of this discourse, all, Nanu and the rest, bowed in deep reverence and accepted him as their Master. He instructed them in fundamentals of his faith. The place near the sacred tank where the Guru sat and discoursed, became the site of a Gurdwara or a House of Lord, named Sidhbatti, whence the Guru's teachings have been imparted to all who would come for them.

1. *Malar di Var.*

CHAPTER 18

AT PANIPAT AND DELHI

From Kurkshetra the Guru moved on to Karnal and thence proceeded toward Panipat. Everywhere the people heard with great zest his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. They heard his Songs, gave up their evil ways and blind superstitions, woke into a new life of the spirit, and became the Guru's Sikhs or disciples. In a few days the Guru reached Panipat. There then lived a renowned Muhammadan *Sufi faqir* named Sheikh Sharf. The *faqir* had a large following among the Muslims. He was a devout man. He had spent his days and nights in ceaseless efforts to realize the Lord, but his efforts had till then bore no fruit. He was as far away from an abiding sentiment of His presence everywhere as he had been in the beginning, when he had sat at the feet of his teacher. He was coming to lose heart.

The Sheikh was in such low spirits when Guru Nanak visited the place. The Guru had taken his seat near a well. One of the disciples of the Sheikh, named Tatihi, went to that well to fetch water for his spiritual guide. Seeing that the Guru was wearing a Persian cap and a strange, motley dress, Tatihi took him for a Persian *faqir*. He approached the Guru and accosted him with the Muhammadan salutation of '*Salam Alaikum*-Peace be with you.' The Guru smilingly replied, '*Salam Alekh* - Salutation to the Invisible Lord'. Tatihi was astonished to hear this pun on the Muslim salutation. He went back and told of it to his *Pir*. The latter, too, was puzzled. 'Who can he be?' thought he. 'Not a Hindu, for no Hindu can dare thus to distort the Muhammadan salutation. Who does not know the consequences of such liberty with the state religion? But no Muslim would mock his own religion. There is some mystery in this. He is either a mad man or one who had seen and enjoyed the Supreme Lord, and risen above the limitations imposed by human creeds. In any case, I should like to see him.'

Such indeed was the Guru's method. Wherever he went, he said or did something which at once attracted people's attention and excited their curiosity. He could then lead them in to a realization of God and His ways.

The Sheikh went to the Guru. He saw that the latter was sitting with eyes half-shut, enjoying communion with God. At this sight a sensation of abiding calm and joy of unknown passed through the heart of the Sheikh and soothed his mind. He sat near the Guru and, after an exchange of greetings, began to put him questions about his faith and denomination. The Guru replied with a Song which did for the *Pir* what his own efforts had till then failed to do. It gave him a vision of the Invisible, Blissful Lord. He found himself face to face with Him. When the Song ceased, the *Pir* clasped the Guru's feet. A strange current, as that of electricity, passed through his body. There was a new light in his eyes, a new strength in his body, a new joy in his heart, and a new life in his soul. The *Pir* became a Sikh or disciple of the Guru. With him all who owned him as their spiritual teacher became the Guru's disciples.

From Panipat the Guru moved on to Delhi. Sikandar Lodi was then the Emperor. The reader has already seen what a ferocious bigot Sikandar was. He was oppressing the Hindus and forcing them to choose between Islam and death. All men of religion who preached peace and toleration were picked out by him and put to great tortures. Kabir and Ravidas were among those who had to experience his fanatic fury. Even at the time of the Guru's visit to Delhi, several men of God, mostly Hindus, were undergoing rigorous imprisonment on account of their faith. They had to labour at handmills. Guru Nanak and Mardana were, likewise, arrested and put in prison¹. Like others they, too, were set to work at the handmills and given corn to grind. The Guru did the labour for a time. The sight of those weak, innocent men of God doing labour far beyond their physical strength under the fear of the jailor's lash, touched

1. According to Latif, the Guru was arrested on the reports of the *Qardars* of the Emperor who 'informed his majesty that a *faqir*, whose tenets were different both from the *Koran* and the *Vedas*, was openly preaching to the people, and the importance which he was assuming might, in the end, prove serious to the State'. (p. 245)

This means that the political effects of the Guru's message were even then becoming visible to farsighted men in the service of the ruler. The general populace could not but have felt which way the Guru wanted to lead them. Yet some writers would have us believe-and Latif among them-that the Guru had no political aims.

the Guru's heart. His body shook with a deep emotion. A glory overspread his countenance. He bade Mardana play the rebeck, for the Word of God had come. Then he sang one of his beautiful, soul-stirring Songs. All prisoners forgot their mills and ills. The wardeners forgot their duty of enforcing labour. The lashes fell from their hands. All listened to the heavenly music, wrapt in blissful wonderment. Others also came to the prison gates and began to listen. Emperor Sikander also heard of this. He, too, came and stood listening like a dumb animal. The Guru sang of the Supreme Lord and His infinite Mercy and Grace. He sang of the transitoriness of human life, of the folly of men who take their physical life on this earth to be all in all ; he sang of the dreadful consequences of evil acts which overtake all, kings and beggars alike ; he sang the noble qualities of love, sympathy, and devotion, which distinguish man from the beasts and raise him to the level of gods ; he sang of the Eternal home of the soul where alone could lasting peace and abiding joy be obtained, and of the way that led to that home of Bliss.

Sikander bowed to the Guru and begged forgiveness for his past sins. The Guru said, 'Forgiveness can be obtained by sincere repentance and honest efforts to undo the wrong done to innocent creatures of God. What harm have these people done to you that you have put them in a place meant for culprits and criminals ?'

Sikandar understood what the Guru wanted him to do. He opened the prison-gates and set free all the prisoners. The Guru then advised him to remember God and serve Him by lovingly serving His sons and daughters. 'Remember O Emperor,' added the Guru, 'all living beings are the creation of God. The divine spark glows in the depth of every human heart. Regard all beings as thy own self and be kind to them all. Differences of creed among men should not mislead you from your duty towards all your subjects. Hindus and Muslims are all His children. You are responsible for both. Remember that acts performed here will accompany you in the life to come. Take heed in time, lest you should find it too late to make amends. You oppress your subjects and subject them to innumerable tyrannies, you issue orders to please your fancy; remember, narrow and steep is the path that awaits you after death. Nobody will come to your help or rescue there. Your fanatic zeal for Islam is

leading you to your own dire doom. Your Prophet will not save you from the consequences of your inhuman deeds, though you perform them in his name. This life is not long; use it for betterment of the life to come, which will be long and lasting. Be just and kind to all, If the subjects are contented, prosperous, and happy, the king rules in peace and security. To be happy and in peace in this life, and to be free from pain and suffering in the life to come, you should be a just and merciful ruler.

The Emperor was deeply impressed with what the Guru said and promised to abide by the advice offered to him.

CHAPTER 19

ATHARDWAR

From Delhi the Guru proceeded in a north-easterly direction. Travelling by short stages, visiting many villages and towns on the way, he directed his steps towards Hardwar. Wherever he went, he awoke the people from a deep slumber of untruth and of clinging to the false, trivial, transitory attractions of the world. He taught them to live ever in God-in thought, word, and deed. He made them give up vain ceremonious worship which affected and melted not the heart, awakened not the soul, and quickened not the lifeblood into a ceaseless yearning for Truth, Love, and Service, Thenceforth they lived as servants of God and brothers of mankind, earning their livelihood by the sweat of their brow, sharing the fruit of their labour with the needy and the poor, and ever living in tune with the Timeless, Immortal Lord.

Reaching Hardwar he proceeded to Khushwant Ghat, where a crowd of pilgrims, led by priests, were performing various ceremonies to wash off their sins and to obtain salvation for their dear departed ones. It was believed that the water of the Ganges at that particular place was sacred, and a bath in it could wash away all past sins. They were washing their bodies in the cold water of the Ganges and were repeating the name of *Hari* with their lips, but their thoughts were elsewhere, their hearts were impure, their souls were asleep. While standing in the Ganges, they were throwing handfuls of water towards the rising sun. The Guru knew the superstition which made them do so. He resolved to make them realize the folly and the futility of what they were doing. He tucked up his garment, stepped into the water, and, making a cup of his hands, began to throw water towards the west. All who saw him were struck with amazement. Never before had any pilgrim thrown water to the west; for the God of the Hindus was believed to dwell in the east. A big crowd gathered around him. A hundred questions were flung at him at once. 'Who are you? Are you a Hindu? Then why throw water to the west, in the direction of the

Mecca ? Are you a Muhammadan ? Then why, of all places, have you come here ? Who are you ?

The Guru smiled and said, 'Patience, friends, have patience. May I know why you throw water to the east ?'

The Hindu pilgrims replied, 'We are offering water to the thirsty manes of our departed ancestors.'

Guru Nanak, 'Where are they ? How far off are they?'

The pilgrims, 'They are millions of miles away in some other world, on another planet.'

Guru Nanak, 'Not on this earth, even? That is good news. Thank you'. Saying this, he began to throw water to the west with renewed vigour. A smile of satisfaction was on his face. The people pressed him for an answer to their questions. He replied, 'Wait, friends. Let me water my fields. The new-sown crops there are withering for want of rain. I shall reply to all your questions, by and by.'

'But where are your fields and crops?'

Guru Nanak, 'Why ! On this very earth, at a village in the Panjab. Let me carry on.' He began again.

Some people thought that he was mad. Some wondered that such simple folk could be found in the sixteenth century. One of them advised the Guru to desist from his vain toil; for the water thrown by him was, as he saw, falling back into the river. How could it irrigate his fields which lay far away?

The Guru stood erect and said, 'Do you say so ? But if the water thrown by me cannot reach my crops which are on this very earth, nay, in this very land and in an adjoining province, how can the water thrown by you reach your ancestors in another, far off, unknown world, millions over millions of miles away?'

This simple question startled the people. The thought had never occurred to them. Scales seemed to fall off from their eyes. They realized how they had been duped and looted by the Brahmins. They were convinced of the utter futility of what the custodians and dispensers of religious knowledge had taught them to do. They begged to Guru to instruct them in the fundamentals of his faith. He told them that all forms and ceremonies, without a true living faith, were worse than useless. They could not take the soul to the feet of the Lord, where alone could true happiness be obtained. What was

the good of bathing in the holy waters or counting the beads, when the hearts and minds wandered all the time after impure, mundane affairs ? One should live in a constant, unwavering consciousness of the presence of God, and do all acts as if in His watchful gaze. If all lived thus, they could do evil to none, they could commit no sin, they could not get entangled in idle, meaningless ceremonials. The Guru gave them the priceless gift of the True Name, awoke them to a true life of the spirit, and knot their souls to the feet of the Timeless Immortal Lord.¹

The People dispersed. The Brahmins and *Sadhus* who were near the Guru were later scandalized to see that the Guru did not observe rules of ceremonial purity. Not only did he prepare and take his food without having a proper cooking-square, but he also ate the food that was offered to him by any of the common people, no matter of what caste they were. The Brahmins and *Sadhus* came to him and scolded him for ignoring the rules of purity laid down in the *Shastras*. 'What purity ?' asked the Guru. 'What rules ? My body is cleaner than yours. It is not besmeared with dust and ashes, as those of some of you are. My clothes are cleaner than yours and than those of the people whom you consider to be pure. The people who bring me food are also clean. How do I break rules of real purity. Purify the spirit within you, and keep the bodies clean. Then none in the world can defile you. No human touch will then pollute your body or food.' The Guru then sang :-

'Strange notions of purity these, O *Pandit* !

Having besmeared a place with dung, you draw a line all round it,

And call it your cooking-square.

You then sit within, false and impure in mind and heart ;

Yet, with all this impurity defiling you, you cry aloud,

"O touch it not, approach it not,

Or this food of mine will get polluted."

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1. Some writers believe that this incident happened later, after the Guru had settled at Kartarpur and begun to sow crops there; but it fits here better in his tours; for after his settlement at Kartarpur, he is generally believed to have made only one short tour in which he visited Achal Batala and Multan in the Panjab. Moreover, for the lesson that he wanted to impress upon the people's minds, it was not essential that he should really have crops towards which he could throw water.

Knows you not that your body is defiled already by the foul deeds ?

And more !

Your heart is impure.

What use, then, rinsing your mouth ?

Nanak says that we should worship Truth ;

If we are pure in mind, body, and heart, we shall certainly attain a union with the True Lord.'

Asa di Var.

The Brahmins and *Sadhus* who heard this Song needed to hear no more. They bowed and sought his instruction. He blessed them with a true life of the spirit, a life spent in the worship of God and in the love and services of man.

The next morning, the Guru saw that a Brahmin, with a large sacrificial mark on his forehead, the triple thread round his neck, and a loin-cloth alone round his body, was cooking his food inside a cooking square. The Guru saw that there was another of his misguided countrymen, entangled in meshes of the pride of caste and the superstition and the pride of caste had to be broken, and the captive soul set free to walk the path of love, service and devotion. With a smile on his lips, the Guru stepped quietly into the Brahmin's *chauka* and said, 'May I have a piece of live coal to light my fire with ?' The Brahmin began to yell, 'You have defiled my cooking-square. Who are you ? Get away or I shall strike you with a burning piece of wood.'

'Be quiet, my friend,' said the Guru, 'I only want a little fire. You are a man of religion. Charity and service of others must be dear to you. That is the central teaching of all religions. Why this niggardliness ? Human touch does not defile a man or his food. Be reasonable, my dear.'

'Do you mean,' said the angry Brahmin, 'that I should allow even low-caste men to enter my cooking-square; for, as you say, their touch will not defile me and my food ? Should I lose my caste and religion for other people's sake ?'

'Are you sure,' replied the Guru, 'that you are all alone in your cooking-square ? Me thinks four foul women of the lowest castes are sitting even now with you.'

'Talk not to me in riddles,' said the Brahmin. 'Speak out what you mean. I am all alone here. I would not permit even a man of my own caste to enter my cooking-square. What are the four who, as you say, are even now with me ?'

The Guru then sang :-

‘Evil-mindedness is a woman of the lowest caste, a *dummi*,
 Cruelty or hardness of heart is a butcher's wife,
 A slanderous heart is a woman of the sweeper caste,
 Wrath, which burns and destroys the world, is a Pariah woman;
 What avails thee to have drawn the lines of you cooking-square,
 When all these four are seated with you ?
 They defile your soul, they pollute the body, they spoil all that you eat,
 Make truth, your restraint, and good acts your lines,
 Make meditation on the Attributes Divine your ablutions,
 Then you shall be pure, indeed:
 For says Nanak, in the life to come, they alone shall be deemed good and pure who
 lead not the way of sin.’

Sri Rag Shlok, 20(1).

The Brahmin acknowledged his error. He was freed from the chain of superstitions which had been around his neck till then. He became a disciple of the Guru.

Numerous others, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, men and women of all castes, were, likewise, shown the path that led to the Blissful Lord, and taken into the holy Fellowship founded by the Guru.

Some learned Brahmins thought among themselves, ‘If we can manage to bring this hermit into our fold, great will be the glory of our religion. He will be another Shankracharya and will revive the fast-decaying Hinduism. Let us go and try.’

They came and took their seats. After mutual greetings, the Brahmins, while acknowledging his spiritual greatness, invited him to be a leader of their community, owning allegiance to the gods and goddesses of the Hindu religion, worshipping them in the traditional way with sacrifices and burnt offerings. The Guru replied, ‘I own allegiance to none but the One Lord of all creation. I would worship no other. What use are the sacrifices and burnt offerings made to please imaginary, impotent gods? Why waste away ghee and other nourishing commodities? Far better will God be pleased if they are given to the poor and the needy. That will be the truest offering to the Creator and Sustainer of mankind.’ The Brahmins were rendered speechless. They slipped away, leaving the Guru surrounded by a crowd of eager listeners. The place where the Guru sat on this occasion is marked by a Gurdwara named Nanak Bara.

CHAPTER 20

AJUDHIA, PARYAG, BENARES

From Hardwar the Guru and his companion proceeded to wards Ajudhia, the birth-place of Sri Ram Chandar. *Bairagis*, a sect of Vaishnava *Sadhus*, lived there in large numbers. The Guru met them and had religious discussions with them in order to wean them from the worship of plants and idols and to bring them on the path of worshipping and meditation of God and serving mankind. The people of the place were also enlightened on the same lines.

From Ajudhia the Guru moved on the Paryag, another famous Hindu *tirath*, now called Allahabad, It is situated at the junction of the Ganga, the Jamma, and the Sarswati rivers, called *Tribeni*. Hindus from all over India gather at the place on the *Maghi* day in order to bathe at the sacred place. The Guru reached there a little before that day, so that he could address his message to a large number of people. He sang to them his soul-stirring and illuminating Divine Song in which he told them, 'God's Name is the real *tirath* which can purify the bather.' 'To meditate over the Name', he said, 'and ponder on the True Teacher's instructions is the best form of ablution. People should cultivate the companionship of saintly persons and hearken to their words. This type of bathing one can have all the year round and in every place.' As ever, the Guru's Songs and discourse went straight and deep into the hearers' hearts and shed a new light on their problems of life.

From Paryag Guru Nanak and Mardana proceeded towards Benares, now called Varanasi, the chief centre of the Hindu religion. They travelled from village to village, giving new life and light to the people in every place. On reaching Benares they sat in a public square of the city. Mardana began to play on the rebeck and the Guru began to song his Divine Songs of the Lord., People gathered around them. The Guru exhorted them to worship God, to live active and useful lives, and to avoid the snares laid for them by the Brahmins.

This alarmed the Brahmins. They swarmed around him and challenged him to have religious discussion with them. The discussion was started by the leading *Pandit*, Chattur Das. His aim was to lower the Guru in the people's estimation. So he began by saying, 'To all appearances you are a Hindu saint, but what sort of a saint are you ? You possess no Salagram¹, wear no necklace of *Tulsi* (sacred Basil), and don't have a proper *tilak* on your fore head. What sort of worship do you do? How will you obtain emancipation?' To this the Guru replied :-

'O *Pandits*, make God Himself your *Salagram* and good actions your necklace of basil;

Make God's Name your raft for crossing the ocean of life,

And pray to Him for mercy and grace.

Why do you irrigate saline barren land where nothing can grow?

Why do you plaster with lime a frail mud-wall which is sure to fall ?

Why do you waste your lives in such vain performances ?'

On this the *Pandit* said, 'O saint, if the *Salagram* and the necklace of basil are so useless as irrigation of barren land, tell us how and by what means the ground may be irrigated and prepared, and union with God be obtained.' The Guru replied to this as under :-

'Make the hands (i.e. service) thy persian wheel and the necklace of waterpots therefor,

And yoke thy mind as an ox thereto.²

Irrigate with the nectar of God's Name and fill the parters of your field with that.

If you do this, you will be owned by the Master of the Garden.'

The *Pandit* said further, 'When the ground has been prepared in this way, it must needs be dug up and prepared for the seed. The crop will also need to be weeded, What instruments shall we use for the purpose?' The Guru replied :-

1. A stone found in the Gandak river and believed by the Hindus to represent god *Vishnu*.

2. That is, employ your body and mind in service and beneficent activity.

'Make love and anger your digging instruments, dig up the soil and weed the crop with them. O brother.'¹

The more you dig in this way, the happier will you be, for the richer shall the harvest be.

The effort and labour thus put in shall not go in vain; for honest labour ever earns its reward.'

As the Guru said this, the *Pandit* interrupted him to express his doubts and fears, and to seek some solace of hope to sustain and inspire him with a zeal for goldy endeavour. He said. 'I feel that I am a crane, and thou, the primal swan of God. Can a crane be changed into a swan ? How ? How can man get rid of past *karma* which determine his destiny here ? How can he turn or change his course of life and tread a new path ?' The Guru replied :-

'If you, O Merciful Lord, show mercy, a crane shall change into a swan.

Nanak, slave of Thy slaves, prayeth, O Merciful One, show Thy mercy.'

The Guru added, 'If God bestow His Grace on us, our past is totally effaced, we get rid of the effects of our *karma*, and turn a new leaf in our life. We can thus be totally transformed. But His Grace shall come to us only if we seek it in humility, through self-surrender and service of God's creatures, and through unquestioning obedience to His will.'

The *Pandit* admitted that the Guru was truly a saint of God. He then asked, 'Bearing in mind the frailties which the human flesh is heir to, tell me how to obtain the Lord of Life and be emancipated.' The Guru replied in a hymn in *Rag Bansant Hindol* which may be freely rendered as below :

'Yes, the body is indeed frail. It is ruled by the heart which lacks maturity and has the wicked five² as its friends and counsellors . It is swayed by desire and hope, on the one side, and by love and hate, on the other. It dwells with those who listen to no sane advice and are ungrateful for what they receive. It is most fickle; at one moment it soars and swells, and at the next, it droops and dwindles. But all this notwithstanding, there is no room or occasion for despair. We have to remember that, in spite of there being fire within all vegetation (plants and trees), the vegetation is in bloom; the ocean is so

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1. Just as when in digging or hoeing a field, love is exercised towards the crop and anger towards the weeds, so good qualities have to be preserved and nourished and bad ones have to be eliminated by the use of these hoes. The more you exert in this field, the happier will you be. Your labours will be amply rewarded.
 2. Lust, anger, covetousness, worldly love (or attachment), and pride.

vast, yet it remains within its bounds, as if tied up in a bundle; it does not flood or spread over the earth and destroy everything; the cool moon and the hot sun reside in the same sky. It is hard for man to understand how all these things are possible. He need to know how, in spite of there being within him the fire of the various passions and the surging sea of desires, he can save and preserve his blooming youth; how, in spite of possessing fiery passionate qualities, he can preserve in his heart cool and delicate human attributes; how, having a heart possessing such evil and good qualities, we can love God. When this knowledge comes to man, He can acquire the capacity to know and obtain the lord of life.

‘One who eats up or annihilates mammon should be regarded as being imbued with God. The hall mark of such a one is that he hoards compassion instead of wealth.’

Chattur Das then asked, ‘Shall our learning and teaching be of any avail in obtaining God?’ In reply to this and other questions, the Guru uttered the long composition or hymn called *Onkar* in *Rag Ramkali*. On hearing the whole fifty-four stanzas of the *Onkar*, the *Pandit* fell at the Guru’s feet. He along with many others, embraced the Sikh faith. As a missionary, he did much to spread Sikhism in the locality. The place where the Guru stayed is marked by a Gurdwara called *Guru-ka-Bagh*.

During his fairly long stay at Benares the Guru took special pains to collect and copy out the sacred hymns of Kabir, Ravidas, Ramanand, and Pipa. These hymns were later embodied in *Granth Sahib* by Guru Arjan Dev.

CHAPTER 21

AT GAYA

From Benares, travelling by short stages and instructing the people as he went along, the Guru reached Gaya, the famous place of Hindu pilgrimage, where Lord Budha had made his great renunciation and performed his memorable penance. The place had later been taken over by Brahmins and was a stronghold of theirs. The priests declared that any offerings made at a particular place on the river secured absolution for seven generations of those who had departed from the world.

The priests professed to feed the devotees' ancestors by offering rice-balls; they lighted up little lamps to illumine the ancestors' path in the high heavens, and performed prolonged ceremonies for their benefit.

The Guru watched them for a while. Then he suddenly burst into a loud laughter. The priests engaged in the solemn ceremonies were surprised. 'Who are you?' asked they in anger. 'What are you laughing at?'

The Guru replied, 'I laughed at the clever deception which you are practising on your simple-minded dupes or, if you sincerely believe that the ceremonies performed by you will achieve the object you have in view, at your own lack of common-sense. Take it either way. Don't you see how ridiculous your ceremonies are? They who have left this body, do they need this type of food? Can any food be transported to the regions where they dwell? Do they need any lamp to see where neither the sun nor the moon sheds its light? No, my friend, they need nothing of this sort.'

But the priests would not yield. They said, 'The essence of the food reaches them and the lamps that we light illumine their darkness. Come, let us help you to perform the ceremonies for the repose of your departed ancestors.' The Guru replied :-

'God's Name alone is my earthen lamp; suffering is the oil I put therein-

The flame of the sacred Name-lamp has consumed the oil of suffering.

Death shall not come near me at all.

O ye people, don't scoff at what I say.

A particle of fire can ignite and consume logs stacked in their hundreds of thousands¹

God is my rice-balls and leafy platters, and His Name is the true obsequies.²

In this world and the next, in the past and the future, that alone is my sustenance. Thy praises, O Lord, are as the Ganga and Benares to me, my soul lives therein. If night and day I love and adore Thee, my Lord, then shall my ablution be true and effective.

Some rice-rolls are offered to gods, and some to the manes;

But it is the Brahmin who makes and eats them up.

Nanak, the rools which are the gift of God are never exhausted and are ever satisfying.³

‘As for you offer,’ continued the Guru, ‘to transport food and clothing to the other world where, you say my ancestors live, well, I and sorry I can’t accept it. It is preposterous. If the articles given to you could really reach the people’s ancestors, strange complications would arise in that spirit world. Suppose a robber robs any person and offers the stolen articles for being conveyed to his ancestors. You will certainly get your fee, repeat the *mantras*, perform the prescribed ceremony, and say that the things have reached the ancestors of those good folk. Well, what will happen if the articles in question, which you say reach the other world, are recognized by the ancestors of the people who had been robbed of them. An angry dispute will arise between the two parties of the ancestors. How ridiculous does all this look ! Be sure, nothing material can be conveyed to those who have left this earth. In the life to come a man can derive benefit only from such charities as he himself bestows, in this life, on the needy and the poor out of his own honest earnings. So, give up this parasitic trade. You are burdening your souls. Live by honest labour. Ever meditate on the Lord most high, sing His praises, acquire good qualities, and serve God through His creatures. Thus shall you please Him and obtain through His creatures. Thus shall you please Him and obtain real sustenance here and hereafter. Even the souls of your ancestors shall benefit thereby.’

1. That is, God’s Name will remove hundreds of thousands of sins

2. *Kirya*, the ceremonies performed on the thirteenth day after death.

3. *Rag Asa*.

The Brahmins were rendered speechless. Some of them, as also many out of the crowd of pilgrims that had gathered, accepted the Guru as their redeemer. They paid their homage to him and implored him to stay among them. He remained with them for a time and then resumed his journey.

From Gaya the Guru and His companion, Mardana, journeyed on the further east. In all places the Guru preached his faith, obtained many converts and established *Manjis* or Sikh Missions. Once, as they were travelling through a thick wood, they met with a band of robbers or *thugh*. The sparkle which lit the Guru's face they took to denote possession of great material wealth. They surrounded the two on all sides. The Guru said, 'What do you want, brothers? Who are you?' The look in the Guru's eyes, the tone of his words, his fearless mien, and his smile of power and confidence, affected the hearts of the robbers. 'We shall be frank with you,' replied they. 'We are robbers. We shall rob you, and kill you into the bargain. That is our trade.'

The Guru smiled again and said, 'All right, do follow your trade in this life; but have you ever thought that this your trade will follow you in the life to come? That all your foul deeds will, one day, stand arrayed against you as witnesses of the evil which you are doing here? Have you ever thought of that, my friends?'

The robbers were taken aback. The Guru looked into their eyes and read their minds and souls. They shivered before his gaze. A strong deep remorse filled their hearts; scales fell of their eyes. They bowed, held the Guru's feet, and begged for forgiveness and light. The Guru bade them rise and sin no more. He told them to give away to the poor all that they had amassed by following their evil trade; to live by the sweat of their brow, to share their earnings with the needy and the poor; ever to remember the Supreme Lord: and to regard Him as present everywhere and watching everything that they said, did, or thought. If they did all that, they would be unable to do evil to any of their followmen. They agreed to do as bidden.

The Guru moved on, travelling through thick woods infested with wild beasts; and living on the fruits plucked from the forest trees. Wolves, tigers, lions, and bears saw him, bowed to him, and went their way. He did not fear anything. He was imbued with infinite love all living beings. The emanations of love which radiated from his heart affected even the wild beasts that came within their range. The beasts of the forest bowed to him; for they saw in him the Glory of the Supreme, Loving Lord.

CHAPTER 22

SALIS RAI, THE JEWELLER OF PATNA

The Guru travelled on, moving from village to village, enlightening people, bringing comfort to the sick and hope to the hopeless. After a time, the Guru and Mardana reached Patna. They sat a few miles from the city on the banks of the Ganges. A big fair was being held there. People were bathing in the holy waters. To them, too, the Guru showed the right path of winning the pleasure of the Lord. Numerous hearts were won there. Several scholars and philosophers acknowledged him the visible embodiment of the best that was contained in the *Shastras*. They saw in him the personification of all divine and human virtues. They adored him as their spiritual guide.

One day Mardana said to the Guru, 'Master, all holy men and all holy books have ever proclaimed that human life is a precious jewel. Still we find that most people fail to recognize its true value and waste it away in idle or sinful pleasures. How and why is it?'

The Guru replied, 'It is true that human life is a precious and rare jewel. It cannot come to one again and again. It is an opportunity given to the soul to raise itself to the bosom of the infinite Lord. Yet, it is a sad truth that very few people are mindful of this truth. Doubt fills their minds and makes them indifferent. They fail to realize the measureless value of this gem of human life, and throw it away like dust and trash. That is the way of the world.'

Mardana replied, 'But Master, it is said that a real jewel cannot be kept concealed, its sparkle will be seen by those who happen to look that way. If life were really so invaluable a gem, most of the people would not, in face of the proclamations of inspired teachers of mankind, fail so ignominiously to realize its supreme worth.'

Guru Nanak said, 'You are mistaken brother. Only the trained eye of a clever jeweller can value a gem at its true worth. Very few people even care to look that way. They are too busy with their pebbles and trifles. They would

not believe the words of a jeweller. To them a gem is but a pebble. To convince yourself of this, take the gem which you found a few days ago, and try to get it valued in the city.'

Mardana went into the city and went about offering the gem in exchange for some or other commodity. A vegetable-seller offered one radish for the gem and would not give even two, 'What good is this pebble to me?' said he. A dealer in sweets was willing to give a pound of his delicious articles for that 'piece of stone'.

Mardana went from shop to shop. Some offered him a yard or two of cloth, some, a few seers of grain, and others, a few pieces of copper money. The dealers in gold offered him a few rupees. At last, he went to a jeweller, Salis Rai by name. The jeweller took the jewel in his hand, examined it with care and unfeigned delight, returned it to Mardana and said, 'Friend this gem is priceless. My whole store of precious stones can but meet a part of its price. Take it back to your Master. In addition, deign to accept this sum of a hundred rupees. I offer this sum to you for your having given me the privilege of having a look at such a rare and precious thing.'

Mardana took the sum and retraced his steps. He was full of wonder. When he narrated his experiences to the Guru, the latter laughed and said, 'Have you seen how people reject a priceless jewel for their trash?' They have no eye for it. Their thoughts and faculties are switched the other way. If you were now to go and tell them what the jeweller has said about the gem, they would simply laugh at you. Similar is the attitude of most men towards this human life. Now go and return this money to Salis Rai. We don't need or deserve it. We have not given him any article in return for which we might keep this sum'.

Mardana went again to Salis Rai. The latter would not take back the money. Mardana placed it there and turned to go. Salis Rai called him back and questioned him about his Master, who would return such a sum and thus demonstrate his freedom from attachment for riches. Salis Rai learnt that the man whom Mardana called his Master was not a man of the world but a saint. He sent his servant, Adhrake, with a basket of fruit for that great one. He himself followed a little later. When Adhraka reached there, the Guru was singing melodiously the following lines from his Songs in *Maru Rag* :

'How can I praise the Infinite, Unfathomable Lord ?

He is the True One, the Creator Lord.

Whomsoever He beholds with His looks of Grace, him he unites with Himself.'

Adhraka was charmed by the melody and found a new light dawning on him. A look at the Guru's divinely radiant face aroused in him a feeling, a conviction, that he was beholding one who was one with God. He fell at his feet, and rose a changed man. A new light was in his eyes, a new life throbbed in his veins, a new joy filled his whole being, an unknown calm descended upon his soul. He became a disciple of the Guru.

Salis Rai reached the Guru's presence by this time. He found the Guru singing a Diving Song in a sweet, charming voice to the accompaniment of Mardana's rebeck. The words which he sang were :-

'Wherever I turn my eye, I find the Compassionate Lord.

He, the Merciful Lord. neither comes nor goes.

He pervades all beings in a mysterious way

And yet He remains detached from all.'

Salis Rai bowed before the Guru, took his seat, and said, 'O great one, you see Him withersoever you look, but we cannot see Him thus. How is that? Grant us a little of that vision' In reply the Guru sang a Divine Song in *Rag Maru* which may be rendered as below :-

'In the clear water of the tank dwell both the lotus and the film of dirt.

The lotus lives with them both, water and dirt, and yet it remains detached from them.'

But O frog, thou recognizes not the lotus;

You eats only the dirt, discarding the nectarious honey in the lotus.

You dwells ever in water but not so the bumble-bee, and yet he comes and takes the honey-juice out of the lotus top.

On beholding the moon from afar, the kamina flower blooms and lowers its head; Its intuitive awareness of the moon's glory is th source of its joy and bloom.

O frog, you deems yourself clever in water,

But see, in the nectar-sweet milk are treasured honey and sugar,

But the louse tasteth them not and sucks only blood;

Similarly, because of your sticking to your inborn nature, you eat only dirt.

You are like the unwise one that lives with the wise and hears the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, but remains still unwise.

You abandon not your nature like the dog which cannot straighten its crooked tail.

Some false ones or hypocrites there are who have no love for the Lord's Name.

Others there are who ever remain attached to the Lord's feet.

If you seek to fulfill your destiny. O Nanak ever utter the Lord's Name with your tongue.'

'You see', added the Guru, 'the realization of the all pervading Lord depends upon one's instinctive, inborn qualities which are determined by the past *karma*.' But if a person begins, in all sincerity, to ever meditate on Him and His qualities, and opens out his mind and heart to divine inspiration, devoutly prays for it and yearns for it, he will come to see the Benevolent Sustainer, pervading all things everywhere.'

As the Guru finished his discourse, both Salis Rai and Adhraka again fell at his feet and were blessed. They became the Guru's devotees and prayed for more light and spiritual aliment. The Guru instructed them in the principles of his faith. He awoke in them a true sense of the importance of human life and aroused in them a desire to make the best use of it. They became disciples of the Guru and brothers and loving servants of mankind.

When the Guru was about to go, Salis Rai and others who had drunk the waters of life which flowed from the Guru in the form of Divine Song, pleaded with him to prolong his stay. The plant of their faith was too tender yet to flourish without the planter's constant care. The Guru's presence was essential for its unhampered growth. But the Guru had also other duties to attend to. The divine Call, which had made him quit his home and family, would not let him rest long in one place, so he made ready to go. The people said, 'But, Master, how shall we live without Thee?'

Don't leave us so soon. Who will sing to us of the sweet Lord and His Blissful Presence? Who will show us the Path whereby to approach and be one with Him?' The Guru pointed to Adhraka and said, 'Him do I appoint your teacher. He has grasped well the spirit of my teachings. His soul is already knit to the feet of the Lord. He will show you the path that has been

shown to him.' Salis Rai bowed before Adhraka, who, till a short while before, had been his servant but was now his spiritual guide.

Salis Rai and Adhraka became preachers of the Sikh faith in Patna. Salis Rai was very devout and sincere in his worship of God as taught by Guru Nanak, and served all with zeal and sincerity. One of his descendants, Raja Fateh Chand Maini, was a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh. It is said that descendants of Adhraka served as masands in Guru Gobind Singh's time and some devotees of the same descent do meritorious service in the Gurdwara of Patna.

CHAPTER 23

REDEMPTION OF NUR SHAH

After a short stay at Patna, Guru Nanak and Mardana moved on further into Bihar and Bengal until they reached Kamrup in Assam. The women of that place were notorious for their magic and wiles. Their chief and the ruler of the place was a queen named Nur Shah. She had acquired her unmatched skill in the practice of black art and spells from a *faqir* of that name and had herself come to be called by that very name. Her palace was most magnificent. Her wily, beautiful maids were most apt and active in enticing people into the snares of their 'Circe'. She herself was marvellously beautiful and charming. To the natural charms and attractions of her exquisite beauty, she had, as said above, added powers acquired by the cultivation of her will-power and the practice of hypnotism. by means of all these powers of her mind and body, Nur Shah mastered the wills of all who came near her. suggestions. They danced to her tunes. Many *sadhus* and *faqirs*, many mystics and hermits, had fallen into her net and lived as her slaves.

A few miles from Dacca was the city of Dhanpur, which was Nur Shah's capital. Reaching near it, the Guru halted a little way off. Mardana felt an irresistible craving for food. Cautioning him against the wiles of the women of that place, and counselling him to think on God and repeat His name all the time, the Guru permitted him to go.

Mardana went to her palace. She welcomed him to a dainty feast. Then she looked into his eyes with a steady, fixed gaze. Mardana shivered. For some time he resisted her influence; for he remembered his Guru and God. But gradually her potent will overpowered him. A strong torpor seized his senses. He fell on his knees and kissed the place that she was standing on. He obeyed her signs and suggestions like a lamb. He ate without food and drank without water. He would cry like a lamb, bleat like a lamb, or laugh like a fool. Thus imprisoned in the spell of her will, Mardana forgot all about his Master.

The Guru was sitting outside the city. His mind's eye traversed through space and pierced through bricks and stones.¹ He saw his Mardana caught in the snares of Nur Shah. He could have, if he had so liked, counter-acted from the start her influence on the will of Mardana. But he wanted to do more. He wanted to rescue the charmer from the charm of her evil practices. So he had let her subdue Mardana's will and make him her lamb. After a little while, the Guru said, '*Sat Kartar*', and started towards the palace of Nur Shah. Crossing the threshold, he stood near the door. Her slaves invited him. He stood there unmoved. His eyes had a strange, steady gaze. Nur Shah, who had been sitting in her apartment, was drawn from there by some mysterious force. She came into the courtyard. The glorious stranger was standing near the gate. He had withstood the charms of her slaves, who now stood with lowered looks and bowed heads. At the sight of his countenance all her powers of will seemed to leave her. Still, for a time, she tried to conquer the unconquerable will of the Master. He withstood all her spells and blandishments will of the Master. He withstood all her spells and blandishments. He stood calm and mining his countenance. Then turning to the Charmer Queen and her companions he said, 'It is not good to indulge in practical jokes with Servants of God. Return my man to me,' Nur Shah said, 'What man ?' This one is my lamb. Take him away if you can, if he chooses to leave me and follow you.'

The Guru went up to Mardana as he stood on all fours like a lamb. On seeing his Master, Mardana began to bleat most piteously, as if appealing for release. The Guru said to him, 'Mardand, say *Sat Kartar*, stand up like a man that you are, be my minstrel, and help me with your rebeck to reclaim and redeem these misguided sister of ours.'

Mardana stood up. Then he knelt before the Master and kissed his feet, saying, 'Where have I been ? Methinks I have been bleating, howling, barking, and crying. Have I been dreaming ? How good of you to have come for me !'

The Guru bade him rise and play the rebeck. The Master then sang the following couplet :-

1. If the reader be inclined to disbelieve this, he is invited to read *Appendix B* and be convinced.

'You go about purchasing saline earth and want musk into the bargain;
Without good deeds, O Nanak, how shall you meet the Spouse?'

In these words the Guru pointed out to Nur Shah and her companions that they were all wasting away their precious lives and defeating the real purpose of human birth. This life, he said, afforded an opportunity to acquire union with the Spouse, but they were wilfully turning away from the path leading to His abode. They were throwing away gems and pearls and were amassing pebbles and sand. They should reform themselves in time, lest it be too late.

Nur Shah listened with wrapt attention. Something within her that had been asleep or dead since long was recovering consciousness and life. But she would not own defeat so soon or so easily. The Guru then sang a Divine Song in which he told her of the right kind of magic and charms which should be employed in order to attain union with the Spouse and thus achieve the real objective of human life. The hymn may be rendered as below :-

The virtuous woman enjoys her spouse; why should the virtueless one bewail ?
If she also become virtuous, then she, too, can go to enjoy her husband.

My Spouse is full of love and sweetness; then why should the women run after
others in search of pleasure ?

Let good deeds be the charm and your mind the thread to string it on;
This jewel can be had at no price; It ought to be strung on the heart's thread
I ask the way but walk not thereon, and yet claim to have reached the destination.

I am not on speaking terms with Thee, my Lord, how can I find an abode in Thy
house ?

Nanak, except the One there is no other.

If the woman remains attached to Thee, my Lord, she can enjoy the Spouse.'

All the time that the Guru sang his Divine Song, Nur Shah's maids kept on exerting their powers to the utmost in order to bewitch the Guru. On beholding their fruitless efforts, the Guru uttered the following hymn in *Suhi* measure entitled *Kuchajji*, Or the woman of bad character :-

'I am a worthless woman; countless are my faults; how can I go to enjoy my
Spouse?'

My spouse's wives are one better than the other; of what account am I beside them?

My female friends who have enjoyed the Spouse are fortunate and happy;
I possess none of their virtues; on whom can I put the blame for that my lack?

What attributes of Thine, O Lord, shall I describe ?

Which of Your names shall I utter ?

I cannot reach up to even one of Your excellences; I am ever a sacrifice unto You.

Gold, silver, pearls, and rubies, which gladden the heart-
These things the Spouse has given me, and forgetful of the Giver,
I have fixed my heart on them.

I had palaces of bricks fashioned with marble.

Infatuated by these things of glory and pleasure I forgot the Spouse and sat not by His side.

Because of old age noises fill my head, and my hair has grown grey.

The woman is proceeding to her father-in-law's¹; how shall she show her face on reaching there ?

I slept and slept and the night of life passed into the dawn of death;

I have thus become separated from Thee and have gathered only grief and suffering for myself.

All virtues are in Thee, O Lord; in me are all demerits.

The only prayer the Nanak has to offer is,

'You have blessed your virtuous brides with Thy company for all nights,

Do bestow one night to me, the unlucky separated one.'

Nur Shah was unnerved and shaken. The Divine Song had given a shaking to her slumbering soul. She grew weary of her efforts. A feeling arose in her that her ill success was due to her sins. Her women noticed her predicament. They decided upon another effort of a different sort. Arrayed in enticing, gorgeous dressed, and with ankle-bells on their feet, they began to beat drums and cymbals, and to dance and sing. The Guru remained unaffected. He paid no heed to their dance or songs. His mind was set on reforming and redeeming them and setting them on the right path. Her sang

1. The region beyond death.

another Divine Song in which he referred to another dance in which the whole world was engaged. It was the mind that was dancing to the tune of Kal/age, the dark age of sin and suffering. In consequence of this mad dance, truth had disappeared from the face of the earth and men were human only in form; in their actions they were worse than dogs. Here is the hymn which he sang:-

‘The impulses of the mind are the cymbals and ankle-bells,
 With them thumps the drum of the world
 The mind dances to the tune of this dark-age (*Kaliyuga*).
 Where can men of truth and continence set their feet?
 Nanak. I am a sacrifice to the Name.
 The world is blind. God alone possesses wisdom and sight.
 Contrary to custom, the disciple eats from his Guru’s hand.
 Love for food comes and fills the mind. If a man were to live and eat from hundreds of years,
 Only that day of his would be acceptable or approvable in which he recognizes the Lord.
 Compassion is not excited by merely meeting and beholding,
 There is no one who receives or gives no bribe.
 The king dispenses justice when his plam is filled (greased).
 If a man make an appeal in the name of God, nobody heeds him.
 The people of this *Kaliyuga* have human forms and high sounding names,
 But their conduct is that of dogs, who, out of greed, wait at the door and obey all commands,’
 He alone who, by the Guru’s grace, deems himself to be a more guest in this world,
 Shall acquire some honour in God’s court.’

Rag Asa .

After completing the above hymn, the Guru paused for a while in order to let its meaning and lesson sink down in his hearers’ hearts. Then he sang another bymn :-

‘In words we are good, but bad in deeds,
 Mentally we are black and impure, yet externally we are white.

We try to behave like those who stand and serve at His gate,
 Who are imbued with the love of their spouse and enjoy the pleasure of his embraces,
 Who consider themselves powerless even though they possess power and ever remain humble.
 Nanak, profitable shall be the life of one who meeteth such women.'

Sri Rag ki Var.

The hymn sent another shiver through Nur Shah. She felt that the stranger before her was reading her mind and her past like an open book and admonishing her for her misdeeds. Yet the life she had lived so far, the powers that she had irresistibly exercised on all who had come within her orbit, had charms which she was loth to renounce. Hence she decided to use another trick, to tempt him with wealth. At her bidding, her attendants brought pearls, diamonds, gold, silver, coral, sumptuous dresses, all things precious that the treasury contained and laid them at his feet, 'All these things are yours', she said, 'Accept them and also me as your servant,' The Guru rejected all the proffered presents and sang the following hymn :-

'O silly, ignorant woman, why are you proud ?

Why you have not enjoyed the love of God in your own house (heart)?

O you foolish woman, your Spouse is near, rather within you, what for and why you are searching abroad ?

Apply the collyrium of God's fear to your eyes, and decorate yourself with love. Then alone can you be known to be a devoted happy wife, if you love the Bridegroom.

What shall an ignorant, silly young woman do if she fail to please her Spouse ? However much she may cry out and implore, she may not enter His chamber.

Without God's grace or good luck she obtains nothing howsoever much she may strive or run about.

Intoxicated with avarice, covetousness, and pride, she is engrossed in mammon. It is not by these means that the Bridegroom is obtained; silly is the woman who thinks so.

Go and ask the happy wives¹ by what means they did obtain their Spouse-

'Whatever He does accepts as good; have done with cleverness and and your self-will.'

1. Who have God for their spouse.

'Apply your mind to the worship of His feet by whose love is obtained what is valued most.'¹

'Do whatever the Bridegroom biddes you; surrender your body and mind to Him; such perfumes apply.'²

Thus spoke the happy devoted wives³; 'O sister, by these means is the Spouse obtained.'

Efface yourself; so shall you obtain the Bridegroom; what other clever device is there?

Only that day is of account when the Bridegroom looks upon the wife with grace; The wife then obtains the wealth of the world.

She who is beloved of the Lord is the happy wife; Nanak, she alone is fortunate. Imbued thus with the Lord's love, intoxicated in state of equipoise and day and night absorbed in His love,

She becomes beautiful and fair to view, and accomplished, and is considered truly wise.'

Rag Tilang.

In this hymn the Guru stressed the point that the consummation and most proper achievement for a good woman was to win the pleasure of her spouse by means of love, devotion, service, and self-surrender; just as the highest attainment for human beings was to please God by right worship and meritorious conduct, and achieve union with Him. Nur Shah and her companions were not doing what was proper and good for wise and virtuous women.

As Nur Shah and her companions heard and pondered over the Guru's words a new light began to dawn upon them; scales fell from their eyes; an urge for turning a new page in their lives was born within them. They realized how they had been wasting their lives in evil deeds-lives that should have been used for better ends-, and moving away from the proper goal of human life and endeavour. They twisted their head-dresses around their necks in token of submission and fell at the Guru's feet.' The Guru bade them rise and listen attentively to what he had to say more.

1. That is, life's object or salvation.

2. That is, let these be thy blandishments.

3. That is the reply of the favourite wives showing how they won God as their Spouse.

The Guru then instructed them in the principles of his faith. He told them to purify themselves by dethroning hate, covetousness, pride, and jealousy from their minds and replacing them by love, sympathy, and humility. He exhorted them to repeat God's Name, conscientiously perform their domestic duties, and renounce magic.

'Become queens of mercy,' added he, 'Man is always going astray. You can make a paradise for him on earth and help his ascent by your own example, by holy living and with the magic of self-surrender. You can open for him the gates of heaven by your own devotion. You can teach him the meaning of love by your own selflessness. You are goddesses in your own right; worship no images, but fulfil your divine mission to sow in the hearts of boys and girls the seed of virtue, and teach them by your own living that courage and truth are rooted in their being. No syllable of religion is ever understood but through a virtuous deed.'¹

As the Guru finished, they all bowed again in token of their acceptance of Guru's teachings. They promised to follow the path shown to them by the Guru. They became his followers.

Nur Shah, on her part, released all her slaves and became a loving, willing slave-in-spirit of Guru Nanak. She renounced magic and along with it, her assumed name of Nur Shah, reverting to her original name, i.e. Parbati. She distributed all her wealth to the poor and began to lead a simple life. She became a preacher of the Guru's faith, distributing both bodily and spiritual food to all who were in need thereof. A Gurdwara was later erected on the place where Nur Shah was won and installed as a preacher.

Having redeemed Nur Shah and her people, the Guru visited such places in Assam as Gohati, Manipur, Kohima, Imphal, and Silhat. At the last mentioned place there is a Gurdwara in memory of the Guru's visit.

During these travels Guru Nanak and Mardana once entered a village where they were not well received. The Guru blessed the people, saying, 'May you live on here in perpetuity!' After some time the two reached another village. They received a very warm welcome there. On departing from that place, the Guru said, 'May the village be depopulated and its inhabitants scattered far and wide !'

1. Raja Sir Daljit Singh, *Guru Nanak*, p. 93.

Mardana was astonished at the Guru's remarks concerning the two villages, the bad people getting a blessing and the good ones, a curse. He asked his Master what he meant. The Guru replied, 'If the churlish people of the former village were to move to other places, they would carry their evil influence wherever they would go. It is better, therefore, that they should remain where they are. The inhabitants of the other village, on the other hand, if scattered, would spread their virtues wherever they would go. So, for the good of the people in other places, it would be better if these good folk were to leave their village and get scattered far and wide.'

CHAPTER 24

AT JAGANNATH PURI

From Assam and Dacca¹ the Guru returned by the Twenty Four Parganas, and going along the coast, reached Cuttock in Orissa. A Gurdwara, named Datan Sahib, commemorates his visit to that city². From there he went to Puri Jagannath on the Bay of Bengal, where Vishnu or Krishna is specially worshipped as Jagannath or the Lord of the World.

Idol worship and the practices and superstitions associated with it were at their height there. In the month of *Asar* (June-July) the big Idol, placed in a heavy iron chariot³, used to be taken out in a procession through the city. So deep was the darkness of ignorance and superstition, that people considered it an act of merit and a means of attaining salvation to fall under the chariot and be crushed under its heavy iron wheels. It was the Guru's mission to dispel such sin and darkness from the land. He was up and doing to show to the misguided people the right path which led to salvation-not utter extinction or *Nirvana*, but active, blissful, abiding union with the all-powerful, all-pervading Lord. He had visited several sacred places of the Hindus and had freed people from slavery to false ideals and impotent gods. It was same object which took him to Puri Jagannath.

He sat at a little distance from the temple. Mardana played the rebeck. The Guru sang a Divine Song. The sweet, heavenly music, the soul-stirring Song, the strange radiant glory that lit the countenance of that strangely dressed Minstrel of God, his posture of complete abandon and imperturbable seren-

1. 'Out in the waste near Jaforabad is a well and ruins of a Sikh temple, which mark the place visited by Guru Nanak. See *Sikh Review*, July, 1955.

(Teja Singh Ganda Singh. p.3. f.n. 2)

2. This is the place where the Guru threw a gree tooth-brush (*datan*) which in the course of centuries has grown into a big tree.'

(Ibid)

3. This chariot is forty eight feet high and has sixteen wheels. It is pulled by the idol's devotees. It is followed by two others-one of Balram, forty four feet high with fourteen wheels, the other of Bhadra, forty three feet high with twelve wheels.

ity, all attracted the people. They came and sat near him, listening to the Song and feasting their eyes with the *Darshan* of the heavenly-inspired singer. The Song ceased; the music on the reback yet continued. The Guru sat with his eyes closed. After a while he said, 'Thanks to Thee, O my Blissful Lord.' Saying this, he opened his eyes. He cast a loving look on the people around him. It soothed many an aching breast, calmed many a fluttering heart, cooled many a burning forehead, bestowed repose and joy on many a restless, uneasy soul. They told him their doubts, their fears, their anxieties, and their troubles. He told them of the Bounteous, All-pervading Lord, the source of all power, life, light and joy. He banished their doubts, quelled their fears, rid them of their anxieties, and taught them to face and overcome their troubles.

They came to love and honour him. The Brahmins, who loved on the people's superstitions, were not a little perturbed. They tried to out-argue him. But his unbounded Love, his simple yet forceful eloquence, his unassuming yet learned discourse, his penetrating yet sweet humour, his fearless yet gentle denunciation of the parasitic life of the priests, and the truth and sincerity of all that he said, silenced all who had come to argue with him. They acknowledged his supremacy and went away.

Evening came, It was the time for the evening service in the temple. The priests and others invited the Guru to join them in their hymn to Jagannath—the Lord of the Universe. The Guru agreed. Going into the temple, he found that in a huge gold salver, inset with pearls and precious stones, They had put a large lamp with several wicks on all sides. It was fed with *ghee* instead of oil. Beside the lamp, in small silver plates, were placed flowers and censers. A number of priests were waving beautiful feathery *chauris* or fans over the image. Musical instruments of various types began to play. All stood up and the ceremony began. The salver was waved up and down, right and left, in a regular circle before the idol. A hymn was sung all the time in praise of the god which sat lifeless before them.

But the Guru was not an idolator to join in the artificial worship of Vishnu with lamps, flowers, and censers, 'The expanse of the firmament, the sun and the moon, the procession of stars the winds and forests, were the fitting accessories of (Guru) Nanak's pure worship of the God of creation.'¹

1. Macauliffe.

He left the inner temple and sat under the canopy of heaven. He looked at the sky with its myriads of shining, twinkling stars, big and small. He breathed a silent prayer of thanks and glorification, closed his eyes, and let his soul rise to the feet of the Creator and Sustainer of the Beautiful world.

After the ceremony, the priests learnt that the Guru had not joined them in the *Arti*. They were angry. They came out and remonstrated with him for his having broken his promise and for not having joined them in the *Arti* or hymn in praise of Jagannath. The Guru replied, 'No brother, I have not broken my promise, I have not held aloof from the hymn to the Lord of the Universe. Rather, you have done so. You did not join me in the hymn.' The priests and the rest of the worshippers were mystified. They asked him to explain what sort of *Arti* he had been performing, all by himself. The Guru made a sign to Mardana, Music on the rebeck began. The Guru raised his eyes to heaven and gave utterance to the following hymn :-

'Your sky is your salver;

The sun and the moon, O Lord, and Your lamps,

The orbs of the luminous stars are the pearls enchased in that salver.

The perfume of the sandal is the incense.

The wind is Your fan; all the forests of the world are the flowers for Your *Arti*, O
Lord of Light.

Thus is Your evening-service performed, O Destroyer of birth and death !

Unbeaten strains of ecstasy are the trumpets of Your worship.

Thousands are Your eyes and yet not one mortal or material eye;

Thousand pure, stainless feet are Your and yet not one foot of flesh and bone;

Thousands organs of smell are Thine and yet not one such organ You have.

This bewitching play of Thine has charmed me, O Lord.

By the beams of Your brilliant face do all things shine.

You are the life and Light of all light.

By the teachings of the Guru is the Divine Light revealed,

My *Arti* consists in obedience to Your Will as it be

O Lord, my soul is lulled and charmed by the perfume of Your lotus feet, verily
like the bumble-bee which is drawn and held by a fragrant flower.

I thirst for You, both night and day, like a thirsty *Sarang*;

O God, let Your grace descend on me in showers sweet.

Allay the thirst of Nanak, Thy Sarang, O Lord of Bliss.

In the Supreme Joy of Thy holy Name let me ever repose.¹

The Song ended. The Guru sat with his eyes upraised in wonderment. The listeners—the King, priests, and the laity—all stood dumb. All their lives they had been worshipping pieces of stone which their own hands had shaped into idols. They had never thought of their own Maker. The Supreme, Peerless Artist who had made the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, and the earth with its myriad beauties, and had set them all to wheel and dance and make eternal music round His throne. Him they had completely ignored. The Guru's Song opened their eyes. They stood in mute admiration, waiting for him to pen his lips and talk to them. At last, after a little while, he said, '*Sat Kartar*', and cast a sweet, loving look on the people. That look gripped their hearts. It cleansed their minds and woke their souls. They bowed and begged for more instruction. He taught them to lead lives of active for more instruction. He taught them to lead lives of active Love and service, to be ever in tune with the infinite Lord of Creation, to worship Him ever in thought, word, and deed, to discern and develop into radiant life the divine spark which was in them all, but which had been buried under the debris of their low passions, impulses, and desires. The dead lived again. A new life throbbed in every vein.

After having thus instructed and enlightened the people, the Guru walked out of the temple, followed by the pilgrims. Mardana asked for some water to drink. The Guru stopped where he was and said, 'Dig where you stand and you will discover a spring of sweet, fresh water.'

Mardana obeyed. The other people joined him. After some digging, a spout of sweet water flowed forth near the sea and the whole crowd drank from it. This spring still flows in the *dharamsala* which the Guru's disciples later built round it.

The people came to the Guru, day after day. They heard his soul-awakening Songs. They listened to his divine discourses. They became his, body and soul. After a few days, the Guru made ready to go. Duty, the divine call, would not let him rest among his loving disciples. But they begged with love and humility. They pleaded that they were yet babes in

1. *Rag Dhanasri, Arti.*

the life of the spirit. They needed his protection and care. They yet needed the nourishment which his Song alone could give, and without which they could not live. He had not the heart to refuse such entreaties so lovingly made. So he agreed to stay for some time more. For two or three months he tended the tender plants which he had raised in that garden of Love and Worship. When he found that they could depend on the lord and Sustainer of all life, he bade them farewell, having established a centre of Sikh Mission there. His disciples built a temple of God on the site where the Guru had sat. They assembled there, every morning and evening, and sang his soulstirring Songs. They found him in his Songs. He lived in their hearts and guided their steps. They lived with him and, through him, in his Lord, who was now their Lord as well.

CHAPTER 25

ROHILKHAND, SULTANPUR, TALWANDI

Mardana had by now become home-sick. He had had enough of travel, hardship, and hunger. Years had passed since he had left his home in a fit of strange infatuation for the Guru. He had been led through thick jungles, over lofty mountains, and across dreary deserts. On several occasions his very breath had been taken away by the sight of wild, ferocious beasts which had met them during their wanderings. It was a miracle that the beasts had not devoured them. But he would run no further risks if he could help it. So he besought the Guru either to return home or to let him go. The Guru advised him to be patient. Duty assigned to them by God had yet to be done.

All the same, the Guru directed his steps towards the Panjab. He took the route which his feet chose under the will of the Lord. Through what cities, towns, villages, jungles, and plains they passed, we have little record to show. It is recorded, however, that they passed through Rohilkhand on their homeward journey.

Rohikhand was then a land of darkness. The Rohilla chiefs who held sway over tract were wild and fierce. They caught all strangers and wayfarers and made them slaves. Guru Nanak's loving heart was touched to the core at the thought of the sufferings of these unfortunate fellowmen in slavery. He felt pity for both the slaves and the enslavers. He resolved to unbind their captive bodies and souls, and make them members of the Holy Fellowship for the establishment of which he had left his home, friends, and family.

Mardana was permitted to leave the Guru for some time. Guru Nanak alone entered the dark country. Soon he was caught and sold into slavery. His 'master' was a Rohilla chief, who wielded considerable influence both as religious head and as secular chief. His religion was, however, a pure sham. It gave him power and brought him offerings. It touched not his soul. Rather, it hardened his heart. His secular rule was savage tyranny. He

asked the Guru to do menial service in his house, for his wife had taken a fancy to the new and unusually handsome young 'slave'. But the Guru had come for another purpose. He could serve even the meanest creature of God out of his love for him and his Maker; but to serve a tyrant was against his grain. He looked at the Rohilla chief with eyes full of profound pity. The light in his eyes, the radiance on his forehead, the love that emanated from his heart, the fear-free peace and serenity that marked his mien, and the ineffable joy that seemed to engulf his whole being, had a quick, strange effect on the proud, stony-hearted chief. A little talk with the Guru, a little music from that siren throat, a beaming smile on the glorious face, reversed the whole position. The master became the slave, the slave became the Master. The Rohilla chief bowed at the Guru's feet. He rose a changed man, with a joyful lightness in his heart, mind, and soul. He became the Guru's disciple and slave. At the bidding of the Guru, all slaves were set free in that city. A regular *Sat Sang* or Congregation of Disciples developed there in no time. The Guru's message reached other towns. People came and fell at his feet. He gave them new life and light; he knit their souls to the source of all joy, life, and Light. There were rejoicings all round. The Guru had freed the captives and had made the captives and the masters alike the slaves of the Lord. But they were now free, unsold slaves, serving their Lord out of their own free will and choice; for in that service they tasted the joy which they had hitherto searched for in vain.

After a time Mardana rejoined the Guru. He again urged him to return to the Panjab, where his relatives and disciples were yearning to see him. 'Remember, O Master,' said he, 'Thy word to Bebe Nanaki. Thou didst promise to visit her whenever her sisterly love and disciple's devotion overpowered her resolution. Last night I saw her in a dream. She was extremely dejected on account of thy continued absence. Loving hearts can communicate their beatings across unlimited space. Surely, thy tender heart must have told thee of thy sister's condition. Why delay? Why try her endurance so long? There are others, too longing to see thee. Some would also be glad to see me. So let us return.'

The Guru smiled and said, 'Thy loving heart has quite well caught the vibrations of love sent forth by loving hearts in the Panjab. Yes, we should go back now.'

So they started towards the Panjab. All along, the Guru continued to deliver his message to the people. Many unclean souls were made pure, numerous dead spirits were enlivened with a touch of divine life; innumerable dry, callous hearts were infused with the vital fluid of love and human sympathy; many a weary, dejected, forlorn 'traveller on the life's solemn main' was freed from despair, shown the guiding stars of Love, Service, and Devotion, leading to the true destination of man, and enabled to carry on his journey with a cheerful, trusting, hopeful heart.

Passing through U.P. and Haryana, the two reached Sultanpur in December 1509 A.D., after an absence of about twelve years. They were greeted by the whole city. Too great for words was the joy of Guru Nanak's sister. His wife, who on hearing of his return, had come there from her father's home, wept for joy. His two sons fell at his feet. They all begged him not to leave them again. He bade them all be of good cheer. He loved them all with a tender emotion. He had a human heart. But a greater duty towards the whole family of man was calling him. Innumerable lost disciples needed his loving presence. In his human heart there was a radiant spark of the divine, too. That spark had to be shared with others who had smothered and crushed out completely the light which God had placed in their hearts. So he could not rest for long at home with his family.

After a few days' stay at Sultanpur, the two started towards Talwandi. On the way, they halted for a day at Lahore with Mansukh, a rich, devoted disciple of the Guru's. When they reached near Talwandi, they halted in the forest about three miles from the village. Mardana begged permission to go and see his people. The Guru permitted him to go home and added, 'Go also to my father's house, but don't tell anyone of my whereabouts.'

Mardana reached his house, and having seen his people, proceeded to the house of Mehta Kalu. The Guru's mother was overwhelmed with emotion on seeing him. She asked him, 'Where is my son ? Where have you left him ? When shall I see him ?' Remembering the Guru's last injunction, Mardana kept silent and went away after a short time. The Guru's mother concluded that Mardana's silence and sudden departure must be in accordance with her son's bidding. So she took some sweets and clothes for her son, followed Mardana and overtook him.

When Guru Nanak saw his mother, he stood up and touched her feet. She kissed his forehead and began to weep, saying, 'I am a sacrifice to thee,

my son. Blessed is the ground thou treadest on, and blessed are the people thou meetest. How happy I am to see thee again ! Now I earnestly desire thee to give up thy wanderings, live with us, and turn thy attention to earning thy livelihood like other people.' The Guru, too felt overwhelmed with emotion on seeing his mother. He called on Mardana to play the rebeck. Then he sang the following hymn:-

'To addicts nothing is so dear as their favourite stimulent;
 To fishes nothing is so dear as water,
 To those who are imbued with their Lord, nothing seems so dear as He,
 Although they may be offered all and everything,
 I am a sacrifice, I would be cut to pieces. O Lord, for Thy Name.
 My Lord is a fruit-bearing tree and His Name is immortalizing ambrosia.
 They who have partaken of it are satisfied and freed from further craving;
 I am a sacrifice unto them.
 You appears not to me, though You dwells with all.
 How can a thirsty one's thirst be appeased when there is a wall between him and
 the tank?¹
 Nanak is Your dealer; You, O Lord, are his capital.
 The illusion leaves the mind when I praise and pray to Thee.²

The Guru's mother then offered him the sweets which she had brought; but he said he required no food; for he had had enough of what he needed. She asked, 'O son, what hast thou eaten and when and where?' He called on Mardana to the play rebeck, while he himself sang the following hymn :-

'By believing in the Name and obeying His word, one obtaineth all that testeth
 sweet,
 By hearing it, one obtains all that is saline in taste.
 By uttering it one tastes all that is of acid flavour.
 By singing His praises one tastes all spices and condiments.
 All the thirty-six palatable dishes are his who loves God and on who He looks
 with favour.
 O mother, other viands afford ruinous happiness;

1. How can we meet God when there is a screen of doubt and illusion.

2. *Rag Vadhans.*

By eating them the body is subjected to pains, while sin and evil afflict the mind.'

His mother then asked him to put off the *faqir*'s dress that he wore and to put on the new, becoming clothes she had brought for him. He replied :-

'To be imbued with the Name is to wear red attire.

To practise truth and charity is to don garments white.

To rid the heart of all dirt and blackness is to put on the blue dress'

To meditate on God's feet is to wear the raiment real;

Contentment is the waistband; and Your Name, O Lord, is wealth and youth.

Mother, other dress affords ruinous happiness;

By putting it on, the body is subjected to pains and the mind is assailed by evil and sin.'

By this time his father, who had heard of Guru Nanak's arrival, went on horseback to meet him. The Guru bowed to him and touched his feet. Mehta Kalu shed tears of joy on seeing his son. He asked his son to mount the horse on which he had come and go home with him. The Guru replied that he had no need for a horse. Then he sang the following hymn :-

'To know Thy way, O Lord, is as horses with saddles and trappings made of gold.

To pursue virtue is as quivers arrows, bows, spears, and swordbelts.

To be honourably distinguished is as drums and lances;

Thy favour, O God, is as high caste for me.

Father, other conveyance affordeth ruinous happiness;

By mounting it the body is subjected to pain and the mind is assailed by evil and sin.'

His father then asked him to go home with him, if only for a short time. He added, 'I have built a new house which I should like to show you. I would invite you to live in it and be among your family for some time at least. The Guru replied: 'The pleasure of uttering His Name is mansions and palaces for me. His gracious, favouring glance is my family. Only that I obey which my Lord doth ordain.'

He added, after a while, that it was as impossible for him to give up his life of a servant and devotee of God as for a fish to live out of water. He had no heart for the joys and pleasures of the world. He loved to enjoy God's blissful company and to make others partakers of that supreme bliss. He had come to visit them, for he had promised to do so; otherwise, his work was not yet done; his travels were not yet ended; the divine call was still ringing in

his ears; thirsty, dying souls were yet crying for the ambrosia of God's Name; hungry souls were yet clamouring for the Bread of God. He could not remain at home. But he would come again.

They had to bow before the high resolve of their son. In obedience to their wish, he stayed with them for a few days. In response to the loveful request made by his elderly disciple, Rai, Bular, he passed a whole day with him. Then he set forth again on his travels. Mardana was with him as before.

CHAPTER 26

WITH SHEIKH BRAHM AGAIN

After leaving Talwandi the Guru and Mardana again set out on their travels. They proceeded towards the west. Crossing the rivers Ravi and Chenab, and after a long circuitous route through a desert country, they went to Pak Pattan. The Guru had already visited the place, met Sheikh Brahm, and had a discourse with him. He was visiting him now to see if the seed of the Name sown earlier in the Sheikh's heart had fallen on good ground, had sprouted forth into life, and was in healthy growth; whether he still remembered and followed the lesson imparted to him or had forgotten and abandoned it.¹ They halted under a tree in the wilderness about four miles from the city. Sheikh Kamal, a disciple of Sheikh Brahm, who had gone into the forest to collect firewood for his master's kitchen, observed the Guru and his companion. The latter was playing his rebeck and singing :-

'You are the writing tablet, O Lord, You are the pen, and You are also the writing.

You are the One, O Nanak, why should we think of another?'

Sheikh Kamal went, and after obeisance, sat near the Guru. He memorized the couplet and went home with the firewood he had collected. He repeated the couplet to his master and told him how and where he had learnt it. Sheikh Brahm was pleased to learn that the Guru had come again to that part of the country. He promptly proceeded to welcome him. After mutual salutations the Sheikh said, 'Nanak, thou sayest,' "there is only one God; why should we think of another." But I say :

'There is One Lord and two ways;²

Which one shall I adopt, and which reject ?'

1. Bhai Mani Singh, *Gian Ratnawali*.

2. He was thinking of the two prominent religions of India, Islam and Hinduism, and their respective conception about God.

The Guru replied :-

'There is but One Lord and only one way;
Adopt that one and reject the other.'

The Sheikh was much pleased and said, 'I am indeed blessed at the sight of your holy self. I feel like saying to myself:

'Tear your garment into tatters and wear a blanket instead;
Adopt a dress by which you may obtain the Lord'¹

The Sheikh meant by this that he was ready to go about in rage or in any tattered dress, If he could thus meet his Beloved.

The Guru replied, 'It is not necessary to dress as a mendicant or to leave the home. Outer forms are of no account here; it is the inner grace that counts. Men who live at home, wear their customary ordinary costumes' and do their duties in the world, shall find the Lord if they fix their hearts on Him. The one thing needful is to remove the impurities of the mind, and fill the heart with the longing to deserve and receive His grace. Just as the true desire of a maid, her faith, and devotion, draw the beloved to her, so does a devotee draw the Lord by his true-hearted consecration to His service. The power of true love is great, but true love can never be lit in the heart until it is empty of self and filled with faith, fidelity, and devotion. God Himself cannot resist the love of the true devotee. He manifests himself to him and then he is aware only of the Beloved.'

The Sheikh, moved to the core, said, 'The man who fails to realize God is like the maid whose desire is unquenched and who even in her grave, cries for her heart's desire, for union with her Spouse.'

The Guru replied, 'The Supreme Lord cares little for looks, dress, age, or appearance. A contrite heart, a pure life, and true devotion win His approval and attain union with Him.

The Sheikh then put the following question:-

'What is that word, what that virtue, and what that priceless spell;
What dress shall I wear by which I may captivate the Spouse?'²

1. Farid's *Sloka*.

2. Farid's *Sloka*.

The Guru replied :-

'Humility is the word, forbearance the virtue, sweet speech and civility the priceless spell.

Make these three your dress, O sister, and the Spouse shall be allured, captivated, and held in your power.

The Spouse shall be hers who serves Him.

Forsaking all His other companions He will go to her.'

The Sheikh exclaimed, 'You are a true teacher, you are of God and God is in you. God has been very kind to me in that I have met you, It would be rude to put any further questions to one like you.'

The Guru replied, 'What need is there for any further questions? I shall satisfy your craving of my own accord. The devotees of God think and speak of nothing else than God. As beauty of form attracts the passionate, food, the hungry, wealth, the greedy, bed, the weary, and abuses, the angry, so does a devotee dwell in silence on God and draws Him to himself. We must remember that this earth is not our permanent home. We must prepare for hereafter. In eating, drinking, laughing, sleeping, and idle gossip we forget death. Selfish desires and lust for bodily comforts rob us of our power to seek the feet of the Lord. Let us be careful. Let us ever repeat His Name; for without the Name the mouth gets defiled.'

The Sheikh was deeply impressed by the Guru's word. But, as we know, he was a *Sufi* and had the virtues and the failings of that sect of Muhammadan *faqirs*. The Islamic religion, founded in the deserts of Arabia, had been spread far and wide with the help of the sword and fire. Under the influence of the Persian and Indian schools of philosophy, it had, however, become Hinduized. This gave rise to the sect of Sufism among the India Muslims. But the *Sufis* were Muhammadans, all the same. They could not give up either the form and appearance prescribed for their community or the Islamic law proclaimed by the Prophet and expounded by Muslim divines. Sheikh Brahm, being a Sufi, had none of the bigotry and intolerance of the ordinary Muhammadans. Still, he was a follower of the Prophet.

Hence, bethinking himself of his duty to his Prophet, he tried to impress upon the Guru the need and benefit of having an intercessor at the Court of God. He said that God could not be approached or moved but through the mediation of the Prophet; So, for a man of religion, the belief in one was

as essential as in the other. 'Let me see', he, 'whom you make man's intercessor.'

The Guru replied, 'No friend, no intercessor is needed. Why raise one who is subject to birth and death to a position of equality with the Timeless Lord? How can such a one intercede for others? In order that one may hope to reach the Lord's presence, one should acquire and cultivate such virtues as are pleasing unto Him. It is useless for a bride who desires union with her lord to seek the help of mediators. If she has beauty of form and character, if she is humble and sweet-tempered, if her heart and soul are filled with true love for her lord, if she ever tries by words and deeds to please him, surely, He will come to her of his own accord. Similar is the case with seekers of union with the Lord. O Sheikh. Why pay homage to Wazirs and Courtiers, when the Great King is Himself accessible to all at all hours? This does not mean that man needs no help or guidance in the journey to the land of the Beloved. One surely needs the assistance of those who know the path and can show it to others. Their assistance and guidance are also needed on the way, lest one should falter or stumble, or one's heart should get entangled in the countless allurements that beset the way. He needs all that help. Still, he has to travel on his own feet. And when the chamber of the Lord is reached, the seeker has to go in by himself. Whether the Lord takes him unto His bosom or sends him out to begin his journey anew, will depend upon his own personal merits. No mediators will be of any help there. Lead a life of sweet humility, of loving, steadfast service of your fellow-creatures, and of constant, unwavering devotion to truth; be ever a seeker after the Lord; serve Him through His creatures; and, at all hours, let a hymn of praise and adoration rise from your heart. Seek instruction and guidance from men of God, and then act on what they say. Let your whole heart, mind, and soul be in such service. You will be surely saved. The Lord will surely take you unto His bosom.'

The Sheikh heard all this with rapt attention. He had been endeavouring to walk the path which he thought led to the Lord, but had been troubled with doubts and misgivings. All these were now removed. The Guru's words, accompanied with his look of divine grace, had burnt out all dross from his heart and transformed it into pure gold. All downward tendencies were swept off completely. The Sheikh saw the glory of God made manifest in the Guru. He bowed at the feet of the Master. A current, as that of electricity, entered

his body through the forehead and sent a thrill of unknown joy through every cell and pore of his body. The Guru gently placed his hand on the Sheikh's back. A fresh and stronger current, a greater and deeper thrill, passed through his frame. He rose at the bidding of the Master . There was a new light in his eyes; a new life throbbed in his veins, a quiet, abiding joy and an all-embracing love filled his heart, an ecstatic grandeur encircled his soul. He became a disciple of the Guru.

His own disciple, Kamal, also became a Sikh of Guru Nanak. Later on, he went to and settled at Kartarpur and spent his days in striving to attain union with God in the light of the Guru's precepts and example, and in rendering service to all who came to visit the holy city.

CHAPTER 27

A LAPER HEALED

Leaving Pak Pattan, the Guru visited Dipalpur, Kanganpur, and other places, and reached a small village towards the close of a day. As was his wont, he looked for a place of rest at some distance from the village. He could have passed the night under the canopy of the starry heaven, but as a servant and minstrel of the All-loving Father, a lover and redeemer of mankind, and a friend and helper of the helpless lowly, he had a special duty to perform there that night. A soul in distress and a body in agony were calling him to minister to them and end the suffering.

He proceeded towards a solitary hut quite away from the village. In that hut there lived a leper, shunned by everybody for fear of catching the disease. Such people were specially dear to Guru Nanak, who had declared time and gain :

‘People who are lowest among the lowly,
Of a caste that is deemed the lowest of all low castes,
All such are Nanak’s friends and companions,
What hath he to do with the high and great?
Where the lowly are treated with a loving care
There do rain Your Grace and Mercy, my Lord,

Sri Rag.

It was to perform his duty towards one such lowly and castaway, person and to bless him with divine grace, that Guru Nanak reached up to the leper’s hut and gave a knock, saying, ‘A lodging for the night we need, O brother; fatigued and footsore way-farers we are, May we come in ?’

The leper opened the door of the hut and saw the two strange guests who had preferred the hut of a cast-away leper to the house of the rich in the village. The very sight of the Guru, who stood waiting at the door with a blessing, radiant, benevolent smile on his lips, gave him a thrill and raised in him strange hopes and a mysterious joy, ‘Come in, by all means’, said he, ‘if you are so minded. But who are you ? Why have you come to this wretched

leper's hut and not gone to the village ?' Even beasts of the forest hate to come near me. The air passing by my hut is dreaded by them. I am a loathsome sight to all. Everybody shuns me and none would even come this way, lest they should catch the disease. My groans and cries go unheard and unheeded. They arouse no sympathy or pity in any human heart. It is ages since I saw a human face or form. Who art thou, that, at this late hour, comest to the wretched hut of such a forlorn, cast away, detested wretch as I, and callest me thy brother ? Perhaps thou knowest not what I am. Please go away. You might catch the fell disease and then curse me for letting you stay here and not warning you off. But if you stay, how happy and blessed shall I feel !'

The Guru replied, 'No brother, I have made no mistake in coming to you. I have not come here in ignorance of your condition. I have come here purposely, in obedience to the orders of the All-loving Father of all. I have been drawn to you because of the fact that you are shunned by others. If the hut is too narrow for us all, we shall be quite comfortable here near the door.'

Saying this, the Guru took his seat on the straw near the door. Mardana, of course, followed suit. Overwhelmed with strange, deep-emotions, the leper burst into tears. The Guru sighed to Mardana to take up his rebeck for the Word of God had come. Then he sang the following hymn in *Dhanasri* measure :-

'My soul is burning in constant anguish.
 This constant burning engenders numerous ills.
 He who forgets the Word
 Screams like a real leper.
 To raise a hue and cry is all in vain;
 For the Lord knows all without being told.
 He who gave us ears, eyes, and noses;
 Who gave us tongues wherewith to speak'
 Who preserved us in the fire of the womb;
 Who made the breath move and speak everywhere;
 Let us ever meditate on Him.
 Worldly attachments, affections and dainties,
 Are all a black that blackens our whole being.
 If a man depart with the brand of sin on his face,
 He will not be allowed to sit in God's court.
 If he meet Thy favour, O God, he repeateth Thy name.

By attaching himself to the Name he is saved; he has no other resource.
Even if he be drowned in sin, he can be saved thus;
For the True One is beneficent to all.'

After a short pause the Guru said that the world was all diseased and the Name was the never-failing cure therefor. Then he repeated the following lines from a hymn of his :-

'When a man forgetteth God and indulgeth in sensual pleasures'
Diseases are generated in his body;
The pervarted one is punished thus.
When man possesses even a little of the Name of the Radiant One,
His body shall become sound like gold and his soul be made pure;
All his pain and disease shall then be dispelled.'

As the Guru sang, the leper remembered his lapses and sins, and was filled with genuine remorse. This repentance halped him to purify his heart and raise his spirits.

The song ceased. The leper forgot his bodily suffering. A joy unknown before filled him through and through. He bowed and touched the Guru's feet. The Guru affectionately placed his right hand on the leper's head, blessed him, and told him to think God and rise. He rose a changed man. The Master's Song and touch had made him whole. Leprosy of body, mind, and soul had left him. He was born anew into a life of the spirit. The Guru stayed there for the night, gave him the Song, and went away in the morning. But he ever lived in the heart of that poor, castaway dweller in that hut. A Gurdwara marks the site of the hut, and till the vivisection of India, His Song used to flow from there night and day, Heeling and refreshing the diseased souls of weary, forlorn travellers on the ocean of life.

CHAPTER 28

SULTANPUR, KIRI PATHANAN, SAIDPUR

Passing through Kasur and Patti, the Guru crossed the river Beas and turned to Sultanpur. His dear sister and sincerest disciple was yearning to see him. He obeyed the summons of that pious, loving heart. He went to her when she expected him the most longingly. Who can describe and measure the joy that filled her through and through ? All his disciples, including the Muhammadan Governor, were glad to see him. He repeated to them his message of his beloved Lord—the message to broadcast which he had left that place some years before.

After a stay of a day or two, he moved on eastwards. Crossing the river Satluj, he toured through that part to the Panjab. In every place he sang of his Lord and directed the people to the right path. After some time, he retraced his steps. Turning northwards, he went to the place where Kiratpur was founded later. There he met Budhan Shah and bestowed on him the gifts of the Name, devotion true, and hope everlasting. Passing again through Sultanpur, he crossed the river Beas and began once more his self chosen, heaven ordained task of weaning people from a life of darkness and sin. Passing through Vairawal, Jalalabad, and other places, he reached the village Kiri Pathana. The *Pathan* residents of the place who, of course, were all Muslims, heard the Song of the Guru and bowed to it as to the voice of God. They became zealous disciples of the Guru, made songs in his praise, and sang them with great devotion.

The Guru continued his journey. After a circuitous tour, in which he visited also Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur, he reached Saidpur. Immense was Bhai Lalo's joy at this unexpected visit of the Master. He narrated to the Guru some of the tyrannies of the *Pathan* rulers of the place. The Guru's tender, compassionate heart was touched to the core. Tears filled his eyes. Then he heaved a deep sigh. His lips quivered imperceptibly. He poured out his heart in a silent prayer to the Almighty Father of all. Then he said, 'Bhai Lalo, woe has been the lot of this wretched land. More is coming. These *Pathan* tyrants will go; for when goodness and virtue depart from men and

nations, as has been the case with the *Pathan* Kings, they surely come to grief. But, alas, along with the guilty ones how many innocent, hopeful lives will be lost, ruined, and plunged into misery.'

Then he signed to Mardana to play the rebeck; for the Word of God had come. The Guru sat with half-shut eyes and a serene, solemn countenance. Then he raised his voice and sang a Song of prophecy and lamentation. Thus ran the doleful Song :-

'As the Word of the Lord comes to me,
Even so do I make it known to you, O Lalo.
With a mighty host, in terrible haste, will he hasten hither from Kabul,
Like a bridegroom, but with a huge crowd of sins and licene as his bridal
procession.

With brutal force will he demand the gift of India's wealth as his bride, O
Lalo.

Woe and misery will disfigure this luckless land.
Modesty, honour, and righteousness will all disappear.
Evil and shameless vice will hold the field, O Lalo dear.
Brahmins and *Qazis* will no longer be called in to solemnize conjugal union;
The devil himself will do that job, O Lalo .¹
Rape and rapine will be order of the day;
No woman will they spare, whether Hindu or Muslim she be.
The Muhammadan women will, in soul's deep agony, read aloud their holy
book,
And in a piteous moan will call upon God, O Lalo.
The Hindu women of all castes, high and low,
Will suffer the same terrible woe;
Then will paeans of murder be sung, O Nanak.
Human blood will form the saffron for such gory rites.
In this city of corpses Nanak sings the praises of the Lord,
And gives utterance to this well-known truth :-
He who has created all beings and assigned to them their different positions,
Sits aloof and watches all.
True is the Lord, true is His verdict, and true the justice that He
meteth out to all according to their *Karma*;

1. This refers to the licentiousness of Babar' army.

Human bodies will be cut into pieces like shreds of cloth;

India will find this saying of mine to be wholly correct.

In '78 will they come and in '97 depart;¹

Another, a disciple of a hero, will also rise in the land.²

Nanak hath spoken the Word of the True Lord now,

And will proclaim the truth at the True One's appointed time.

Lalo asked the Guru what he meant by saying that God had assigned different positions to all beings. The Guru replied as follows :-

'God can cause lions, hawks, kestrels and falcons to eat grass;

And the animals which eat grass He can make eat meat;

1. These dates refer to the careers of the Mughals in India. The first of these refers to Babar's third invasion, during the course of which Saidpur was sacked in the Samvat year 1578 or 1521 A.D. the Guru's prophecy about the fate of that city and the advent of the Mughals was thus fulfilled.

The second of these dates, '97, may refer either to the expulsion of Humayun from India, which happened in the Samvat year 1597 (1540 A.D.) or to the invasion of Nadar Shah, which took place in the Samvat year 1797 (1739 A.D.). As regards the former of these two events, Marshman in his *History of India* writes as follows :- 'He (Humayun) fled from the field of battle to Agra, pursued by Sher Shah, and had barely time to remove his family to Delhi, From there he was driven to Lahore, where his brother instead of affording him asylum, hastened to make peace with the victor and was allowed to retire to his territory beyond the Indus. Thus fell the kingdom which Babar had established, and not avestige of Mughal sovereignty remained in India at the end of fourteen years. The throne of Delhi was restored to the Afghans.' (vol.1, p. 99.)

Regarding the invasion of Nadar Shah, the same historian writes :-

'The Mughal empire, which had been in a state of rapid decay for more than thirty years, since the death of Aurangzab, received its death-blow from the irruption of Nadar Shah and the sack of the capital. Its prestige was irretrievably lost, and the various provinces ceased to yield any but a nominal obedience to the throne of Delhi. The house of Babar had accomplished the cycle of its existence, and sceptre of India was to pass into other hands,' (vol. 1, pp. 201-202.).

2. A disciple of a hero may be taken to be Sher Shah Suri, who expelled Humayun and brought about a fall of the kingdom established by Babar. Sher Shah Suri is worthy to be called a hero, because he was the first king to from rules of government applicable equally to Hindus and Muslims. Later on, Akbar adopted the same policy.

These words may, if '97' refer to Nadar Shah's invasion, be taken to refer to the Khalsa, the disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, the great hero. We know that the Khalsa ended the tyrannical rule of the last of the Mughals and established itself in supreme power in the Panjab.

He can establish such a way of life if so He Wills.

He can cause hills to appear in rivers, and unfathomable rivers in sandy deserts.

Of a mere worm He can make a sovereign, and reduce an army to ashes.

All living beings live by breathing; but, however,

What wonder would it be if He caused them to live without breath?

Nanak, as it pleaseth the True One, so doth He provide sustenance to all.'

Var Majh.

The words of the Guru, sung in a tone to pity and sorrow, spread and gloom over the listeners. A Brahmin placed some fruit before the Guru and said, O Image of the Lord, Guru Nanak, be pleased to avert the doom that thou sayest is about to fall on the land.'

'Brother,' replied the Guru, 'what am I that I should try to interfere in the working of the Lord's Will ? I have simply given utterance to the Word of God as it came to me. The evil and sin, the tyranny and oppression, which are being practised in this land, have invited their own punishment. God's wrath comes in the form of Babar. Sin shall destroy sin, but numerous innocent people will also suffer terribly. I see the whole heart-rending scene clearly as it will be enacted in a short time. But the ways of the Lord are inscrutable. His Will has to prevail. If you desire safety, you should leave this city and live a few miles away, near a tank, The victorious plunderers will not pass that way'.

CHAPTER 29

HAMZA GAUS AND MULA KARAR

It has been seen how, under the influence of Hinduism there had arisen among the Muhammadans the new sect of Sufism. The *Sufi faqirs* performed severe penances and practised religious austerities, sometimes even than those performed and practised by Hindu hermits. By such performances and by the practice of concentration, they developed their power of will and acquired occult powers. They excelled the Brahmins in cultivation and encouragement of superstition among the people. They would exercise evil spirits by their spells, would feign to avert impending disasters, would promise sons to the sonless and riches to the poor, and do a thousand other things to gain power and control over the people's minds. If someone incurred their anger, they would threaten to destroy him by inviting on him the wrath of God. In this way they came to wield great influence among the people. By fair promises and dark threats they obtained converts to their religion. Thus the *Sufi Faqirs* though no favourites with the orthodox Muhammaoan Government, were in their own way, supplementing its efforts towards the spread of Islam in India.

The Hindus were thus suffering under double oppression. Then inferiority complex developed in them during oppression. The inferiority complex developed in them during centuries of subjection had reconciled them to their low, miserable lot. They dared not protest or grumble. The spirit within them had ceased to stir even at the most horrible excesses. They had no self-confidence or self-respect. Guru Nanak wanted to make them a free, self-respecting people, who would not stoop to oppress others nor bend against a tyrant's blows. He fain would end the system of government under which one sect, community, or group of men, could treat others with cruelty, contempt, and arrogance. He realized that this huge task of spreading the gospel of freedom, enuality, and brotherhood, could not be accomplished in a day or by a violent revolution, even if he were so inclined. The entire outlook of the rulers and the ruled had to be changed. A moral regeneration had to be engendered and fostered in them, so that while, on the one hand, those in

power might come to look upon opperession in all its forms as an unpardonable sin against God and humanity. on the other, those whose lot it was to be ruled and ordered, should acquire such dignity and self-respect as would make it impossible for them to bend or bow before the tyrant's threats or steel. Both the rulers and the ruled had to be awakened to a sense of the duties and the rights of Man.

So, on the one hand, he called upon the people to worship the Fearless, Omnipotent, Fear-quelling Lord and become brave and fearless; on the other, he boldly met tyrants and oppressors, whenever possible, remonstrated with them against their inhuman, ungodly acts, and , turning their thoughts towards the kind and merciful Father of all, urged them to treat their subjects as they would themselves wish to be treated by the Great King. Thus, as we have seen, he feared not the power or wrath of Malik Bhago, humbled that haughty man before the eyes of his neighbours and fellow-townsmen, banished all feelings of inferiority from the hearts of Bhai Lalo and others of his low status, and aroused in them a sense of equality and self-respect. We have seen how he met the ferocious bigot, Sikandar Lodhi, and made him listen to his Divine counsel and vow to be a kind and just ruler. Similarly, whenever he heard of any *Sufi Faqirs* using their positions and powers in a wreckless manner, he boldly went to them, discussed things with them, overpowered them with his deep learning and spiritual grandeur, and taught them to live as brothers and helpers of the people of all castes and creeds, Two such conquests of love we shall narrate here.

In the city of Sialkot (Pakistan) there lived a Muslim *faqir* nemed Hamza Gaus. By virtue of the severe penances which he had performed, by the occult powers which he was generally believed to possess, by means of spells and charms which he gave to the people for the fulfilment of their desires, and by means of other contrivances he had acquired very great influence in the locality.

A Khatri Hindu had no son. He approached the *Pir* and begged him to intercede for him and to get him the gift of a son. He promised to give the first-born to the *Pir*. Hamza Gaus promised to pray for fulfilment of the Hindu's wishes.

In due course, three sons were born to the Khatri. He took the eldest to the *Pir* and said, "Here do I make over the child to you. Now name his price. I shall pay that and buy him from you; for such is the practice in such cases."

Hamza Gaus wanted to have the child and nothing else. The Khatri offered him a large sum of money, even weight for weight in silver and gold, but the *faqir* would have none of it. The Khatri took the child back to his home.

The *Pir* got angry. He vowed vengeance not only on the offending Hindu. But also on the whole city which harboured such a promise-breaker. So he retired into a closet which had a dome over it. Closing the door from inside, he directed his disciples not to disturb him or let him be disturbed on any account. He would come out himself after he had his wishes fulfilled by dint of the austerities which he was to practise for forty days, concentrating his thoughts, all the time on the doom which he wanted should fall on the city and its people.

The news of this resolve of the dreaded *faqir* spread in the city like wild fire. The people, who had reasons to believe and fear that the *Pir* really possessed powers to destroy the city, were in great despair. Most of them began to observe fasts and to say prayers to their various deities. But there seemed to be no effect. A deputation of the people went to the door of the *Pir's* cell and raised a loud lament. But the *Pir* remained unmoved.

The people of the city were in this predicament when Guru Nanak hastily left Bhai Lalo; for his highly sensitive heart had caught the vibrations sent forth by the woe-laden hearts of the people of Sialkot. Passing through Pasrur, he reached near the city. He sat outside, by the side of an old graveyard under a Ber tree. The *Pir's* dome was visible from there. After having refreshed himself a little, the Guru sent Mardana to the door of the *Pir's* cell. He was to tell the watchers at the door that the Minstrel of God Almighty had come and would speak to the *Pir*. The disciples of the *faqir* said that they could not disobey their *Pir*. Mardana returned to the Guru. He was sent again. He was asked to appeal in the name of God and on behalf of the whole populace of the city, which was in great panic. If all appeals failed, he was to tell the watch-keepers at the door that their *Pir's chhila* or penance would be broken by the Will of God exactly at mid-day. Mardana went and said all this. But the disciples of the *Pir* were adamant. Still, Mardana's words did not fail to alarm them a lot.

Gradually, the news spread in the city that a quaintly dressed man of God had come, that he had tried to get an opportunity of speaking to the *Pir* and dissuading him from his wrathful resolve, but, having failed, had foretold that the *Pir* would be baffled in his ungodly object, because his *chhila*

would break by the Will of God. Crowds of people gathered around the Guru. He sat with his eyes half-shut and slightly raised in the direction of the dome under which sat the *Pir*. Mardana was playing the rebeck and singing one of the Master's Songs of prayer and invocation to the Almighty Father of all.

The people sat in great suspense. The sun slowly climbed up the sky. Exactly at noon a loud sound was heard from the direction of the dome. It seemed that a strong building has cracked as if by a bolt of thunder. It was found that the dome under which the *Pir* sat in concentration had cracked. Bright rays of the sun had penetrated into the dark room and fallen on the head of the *Pir*. The loud sound of the crack and the beam of rays which had suddenly fallen on him in the darkness had disturbed him and interrupted his concentration. He became afraid lest the roof should fall on his head. He got up hastily, opened the door, and rushed out of the cell in great terror.

The *Chhila* was thus broken. The people felt relieved all bowed to the Guru and thanked him for his having saved them from the consequences of the dreaded *Pir's* wrath. The *Pir* himself came to the Guru in great humility. The Guru represented to him the injustice of his wrath against a whole city. The *Pir* complained that the Khatri had broken his promise and deserved chastisement along with his neighbours, who had not forced him to fulfil his word. 'In fact,' added he, 'all people here are mammon-infatuated liars and deserve no mercy.'

The Guru said, 'But sinners and wrong-doers should be reclaimed and not destroyed. God is Love. It becomes us, His servants, ever to strive to bring the misguided people on to the path that leads to His Abode. We should show them how God loves the repentant sinners, by loving and forgiving them ourselves. There is too much of hatred and oppression in the land already. We, men of God, should sow seeds of love and amity among the people. Moreover, why should a *faqir* wish to have someone as his son? You have your disciples to serve you. If you would have children, become a householder. Besides, I cannot believe that the entire city is peopled by mammon-infatuated, spiritually dead people.'

The Guru then told Mardana to go to the business centre of the city and purchase for him truth and falsehood worth two paise. Mardana went round the shops, asking for the commodities in question. But all laughed at his queer quest. None took him seriously until he reached the shop of one Mula

Karar. The latter wrote on a slip of paper, 'Death is true and life is false.' This paper he gave to Mardana for delivery to the Guru.

When Mardana gave the slip of paper to the Guru, the latter turned to Pir Hamza Gaus and said, 'You see, here we have one who is spiritually alive, who knows what is true and what is false and who cannot be mammon-infatuated. So your wrath against the whole city was unjust and unjustified.'

The *Pir* was convinced of his error. He bowed before the Guru and vowed to live, thenceforth, as a torch-bearer of the all-loving, Merciful God The *Jujaba* (Ber) tree, under which the Guru sat, still exists outside the city and is called Baba's Ber. A Gurdwara stands at the site to commemorate the event.¹ The domed cell of the *Pir* with its cracked top stands within sight of the gurdwara.

Mula Karar hastened to meet the Guru, and fell at his feet. The Guru was glad to receive him. Mula accompanied the Guru on his travels for some time. Then he returned home. When the Guru visited the city a second time, he sent for him. Mula, it seems, had had enough of the sort of life which the Guru's company entailed; but he did not wish to disobey the Guru straight away. So he hid himself in a dark room of his house and his wife told Mardana that Mula had left for a distant place. When Mardana delivered her message to the Guru, he said, 'This man used to declare that life is false and death is real, yet now he seeks to cling to what is false. But who can escape death ? It comes to all, wherever one may be.'

As Mula lay hidden in the dark room, he was bitten by a snake and died. On this the Guru composed the following :-

'Friendship with Karars is false, and false is its foundation.

Mula saw not whence death would come to him.'²

1. It is now in Pakistan. Who knows what may have happened or may happen to it ?

2. Additional *Slokas* of Guru Nanak.

CHAPTER 30

MIAN MITHA

When his work was accomplished at Sialkot, the Guru proceeded to Mithankot near Pasrur. In that place there then lived another *Sufi Faqir* equally well - known for his real or affected powers. He was held in great awe by the people near about him. Many were his followers. Many a Hindu youth had accepted Islam under the spell of Mian Mitha's power. The *Faqir* himself was given to penances and austerities. His heart was dry. He lacked the saving qualities of love and human sympathy. In consequence, the path that he had chosen took him daily farther and farther away from the right path which could lead to the source of love, life, and light. He was misleading others, too. He was verily like a man who sets out from his home intent on drinking at the ocean of nectar, but who, reaching near the shore, begins to play with conchs and pebbles lying there, and forgets the object of his journey thither. Mitha was engaged in such child's play. He was in the grips of a great delusion. But his example was catching. He had enslaved the belief of the people around him. They had ceased to look up to the fountain of all love, life, and light.

Guru Nanak heard this. He resolved to break the dome of Mian Mitha's delusion, and to show him the Light of heaven, as he had already shown to Hamza Gaus. He went and halted in a garden at a little distance from Mian Mitha's place. The Guru's heavenly music and divine Songs attracted the people, who began to assemble in large numbers. All who saw the Guru and heard his Songs became his, body and soul. They began to adore him. Among such new admirers of the Guru was Pir Abdul Rahman, Mian Mitha's religious teacher,

But when Mian Mitha heard of the Guru's arrival, he said, 'Nanak is a good *faqir*, no doubt; but if I meet him, I shall squeeze him dry like a lemon. I will go to see him and will take the cream off him as I would skim milk.' Mardana heard these boasts of Mian Mitha and reported them to the Guru and added, 'Mian Mitha is but thy automaton and will play as thou causest him to play.' The Guru remarked, 'Wait and see how God carries out His will.'

Pir Abdul Rahman told his pupil, Main Mitha, of the Guru's greatness, and advised him to meet that dear one of the Lord and obtain his blessings. Mian Mitha, though a *Sufi*, was not free from feligious narrow-mindedness. He had heard that the Guru was a 'Hindu'. Hence he did not like the idea of a renowned Muslim *faqir's* going to a Hindu, no matter how great the latter might be. Still, when his teacher praised the Guru and called him a beloved one of the lord, Mian Mitha could not but obey and go. So he went. He found that Mardana was playing a heavenly tune on the rebeck and singing a soul-stirring Song of the Master. The Guru was sitting as in a trance. The music, the Song, and the radiance on the Guru's face penetrated to the innermost depths of Main Mitha's heart. He quietly sat near the Guru. After a while the Song, and the radiance on the Guru's face penetrated to the innermost depths of Mian Mitha's heart. He quietly sat near the Guru. After a while the Song ceased. A little later, the Guru opened his eyes. What eyes? They seemed to be laden with ambrosia and emitting the lusture and glory of a mind at peace wit all. They were so sweet, so loving, so deep, so penetrating, and so full of repose and joy ! The Guru's countenance that looked like that of a bride who had enjoyed the company of her lord to her heart's content, and touch of her lord, her eyes yet filled with sleep-free heavenly pleasure and trying to recatch the glimpses of the lord who had just hidden himself from view. In that contenance there were the clam and joy of hearty satisfaction, a hope and an assurance of future blissful union, and a compassion for the unfortunate creatures who were unable or unwilling to enjoy the company of the Spouse, and a resolve to convey to the people the joyful tidings of the eternal Abode of the Bounteous Lord.

Mian Mitha saw all this. The Guru turned his eyes on him. The Mian felt as if he had been pierced through the heart. Impure blood which had engendered and nourished in him seeds of pride, hatred, and jealousy, seemed to be oozing out, drop by drop. In its place, pure bright blood, surcharged with love and sweetness, was beginning to course through his veins.

The Guru greeted him with a loving smile and enquired how he was. The words roused the *Sufi faqir* from his reverie. He returned the greetings and thanked the Guru. All around him he saw sitting people from the village, Hindus and Muhammadans alike. A look at them revived in him his old pride, and his zeal for Islam. He remembered that the Guru was a 'Hindu'. How good it would be, he thought, if he could be converted and saved,'

Siddhas, Yogis, Pandits, Qazis, and Faqirs had all, on meeting the Guru and knowing his greatness, cherished the same desire. They had wished to convert such a great one to their path. But little did they know, when they gave themselves up to such ambitious dreams, that the Guru was destined to convert the like of them all to his new faith.

Main Mitha began by questioning the Guru about his faith. When he learnt that the Guru was a worshipper of One God, he felt glad; for he thought that the Guru was already very near Islam. Half the battle was already won. 'He has,' thought he, 'already freed himself from the worship of the millions of the Hindu gods and goddesses. If I can graft on his faith a belief in the Prophet, what a glory shall I win for myself and my faith !'

Thinking thus, he said, 'O Nanak, there are but two things by accepting which one can be approved by God. The first is God Himself and the second, the recite the *Kalma* (Islamic Creed), thou shalt find acceptance in God's court.' He then tried to impress upon the Guru the spiritual necessity of having a mediator at the court of God, and dilated upon the powers and greatness of the Prophet of Islam. The Guru calmly heard all that the zealous Muslim *faqir* had to say. Then he smiled and said, 'Yes, the first name is that of God; the Prophet is but a gatekeeper at His gate. O Sheikh, form good intentions, be sincere in thought and actions; thou shalt find acceptance in God's court without the aid of any mediator. I believe in and worship the One alone. I need no second. No mediator is necessary. If you join with Him one whom you call His Prophet, you cease to be a worshipper of the One alone. Why, then, should you denounce as kafirs or infidels those who join with Him two, fifty, a hundred, some thousand or some million ? The difference is one of degree and not on kind. They are like you in not worshipping the Peerless Lorā alone.'

'But,' replied the *Faqir*, 'we do not believe the Prophet to be God. We believe only that through his mediation we shall be saved from the consequences of our sinful acts. He is not the end of our worship, but only the means of our getting His Grace; whereas the Hindus actually worship their deities. Their thoughts do not rise above or beyond the objects of their worship. For them, each one of the latter is God.'

'But friend', said the Guru, 'they too, can say that they regard their gods only as intermediaries. They can quote scriptures to show that they believe in One God alone. They can as well aver that through these deities they hope to please and reach God.'

'Yes,' returned the *faqir*, they, may say so, but such is not their actual belief. We actually believe that One God is the Creator and Sustainer of all, and that He alone is worthy of our homage.'

The smile on the Guru's lips became brighter. 'No, friend,' said he, 'you don't believe that One God is the Father of all mankind. If you did, how could you hate, oppress, persecute, and murder your fellow-men ? If you believed in One God and, at the same time, felt that the 'idolatrous' Hindus were wrong in their faith, you could not have hated them as you do now, you could not have treated them as you treat them in your fanatic zeal for your religion. If, in your view, they are misguided, your love for God should have aroused in your hearts love and sympathy for these misled sons of God. God is Love. It is through Love that we can hope to reach Him. Hatred leads us away from Him. Methinks you do not really believe that the same God made you as made the unfortunate Hindus. How then can it be said that you believe in One God who is the Father of all mankind ? There is something wrong with your belief and conduct.'

The *faqir* found himself beaten on his own ground. He changed the topic, and said, 'Do you believe in the day of Judgement ?'

'Yes,' replied the Guru, 'every one has to reap what he sows, has to be judged by his deeds'

'That is good,' said the *faqir*, 'but have you ever thought how unlucky will Hindus find themselves on that day ? Muhammadans are buried after death. Their bodies are placed in the custody of the earth. When, on the Day of judgement, the angel of God blows his clarion the earth shall deliver forth the dead lying in its bosom. They will then be conducted into the Paradise. But how different will be the fate of the Hindus. Their bodies are burnt. The bones and ashes are scattered. How can they regain their bodies ? They are burnt here and will, on that account, burn for ever in the fires of Hell.'

'That is an idea, indeed,' replied the Guru. 'But you ignore one or two things. In the first place, the bodies of Muhammadans buried under the earth are changed to dust quite as well as those of Hindus. Till your Day of judgement no trace will be left of them. If they can rise in spite of all this, there is no reason why the bodies of Hindus incur the wrath of God on account of their bodies being burnt, well, then Muhammadans, too, cannot escape a similar fate; for even their bodies, too, get burnt, after all, in most cases.' 'How do you say that ?' enquired the *faqir*.

‘Thus,’ replied the Guru. ‘You know that potters are very found of the clay from old grave-yards as that is very tough. They dig up such places, shape the clay into pots and bricks, and set them to bake in furnaces. There thus burns the clay produced from the decay of Muslims’ bodies, and, If your argument be true, cries aloud in great agony. But you are misled, my friend. These things that you talk of are beyond the comprehension of man. He alone knows them who created the universe and maintains and sustains it in His own way. Let us only love Him and His creatures. In that way alone can we hope to become acceptable to Him.’¹

What more could the faqir say ? He was silenced. After a while, the Guru smiled on him his gracious, illuminating smile and said, ‘Well, brother, in path sat before us by the Lord, all are treated according to their deserts. Castes or creeds make no difference. Don’t be misled by the thought that because yours is the State-religion in this land, and because you can force it on others, you are, in any way, higher or better in the eyes of God. Throw to the winds all such narrow thoughts, jealous views, and man-made barriers and limitations. Drink at the fount of Nectar, if you get a chance to get it’

The *faqir* was won. He bowed at the Guru’s feet and was blessed with the priceless gift of the Name-of a life lived in a constant, steadfast communion with the Lord and in lovingly serving all His creatures.

Thus did Guru Nanak fearlessly face the most powerful of Muham-madan faqirs and won them over to his path.

1. *Asa di Var.*

CHAPTER 31

DUNICHAND AND KARORIES

The Guru now turned towards the north. Walking the people to a life of the spirit, engendering in them a passion for love, service, and devotion, cooling and soothing many a fluttering heart, the Guru reached Lahore. He sat on the bank of the Ravi. Mardana played the rebeck and sang the Master's divine Songs. Sometimes the Guru himself would lift his melodious voice and sing of the Lord and of man's duty towards Him and His creatures. Thus did the two sit on the bank of the Ravi, under the canopy of heaven, on the carpet of grass, in the bosom of Nature, in a staid, unbroken communication with the Infinite Lord of the universe.

Gradually, charmed by the thrilling, soul-stirring music, and drawn by the loving, powerful personality of the Guru, people began to assemble around him. Many a diseased heart was made whole; many a restless soul was calmed and steeped in joy; many a dry, unfeeling wreck of a man was infused with love and life.

Duni Chand was a millionaire Khatri who farmed the territory of Lahore from the Emperor. He heard of the Guru. Some invisible strings in his heart were touched at the mention of the name which was on everybody's lips. He went to the Guru and begged him to visit and sanctify his house. The Guru smiled and said, 'Brother, servants of God like me are better away from rich, luxurious palaces. You may have to pay dearly for my visit to your palatial residence.'

The said millionaire was performing the *Shardh* ceremony for his dead father. A hundred Brahmins and several *Sadhus* and *Faqirs* had been feasted and given rich presents. The Brahmins had assured Duni Chand that his father had had enough that would last him for a year. It was on this occasion that he had invited the Guru. But the Guru's visit was not like that of the Brahmins and others who had partaken of the rich food served by Duni Chand. The Guru had in abundance and which he could give according to his pleasure. He had gone there to bestow on Duni Chand another and higher kind of wealth in

which that millionaire was a veritable pauper. He had gone there to open out to Duni Chand the rich, inexhaustible treasures which provide real sustenance to mankind, both here and hereafter.

Observing the crowd of Brahmins and others who were being fed, the Guru asked Duni Chand what the matter was ? Duni Chand replied that it was the *shradh* of his father.

‘What is it for ?’ asked the Guru.

‘To feed my dead father’s spirit,’ replied the banker.

‘Have you satisfied his craving ?’

‘I should think so,’ replied Duni Chand. ‘The head-Brahmins has assured me that the spirits of my father and other ancestors have all have got enough that will last them for a whole year.’

‘And did you believe him ?’ asked the Guru with a smile. ‘What a simple man you are ! How could the food eaten by these well-fed Brahmins have reached your father in the spirit world ? There seems to be no means of communication between the Brahmins’ bellies and the other world. I tell you that your father’s unsatisfied cravings for things of this earth are a source of constant torment to him. He wanders madly about like a hungry wolf in search of satisfaction which he never can have.’

Duni Chand heard all this with an open mouth. A deep grief overcame him. ‘Really then ?’ asked he, ‘does my father suffer the torments of unsatisfied cravings in spirit of all that I have been, from year to year, bestowing on the Brahmins in his name ? Is he really a hungry wolf ?’

‘The dismal truth,’ said the Guru, ‘is that your father has become incarnate in a wolf. Why ? You will learn it in due course. The wolf now lied under a bush in a clump of trees about six miles away. You may convince yourself of that if you like. Go out into the forest on the river’s bank. You will see a wolf under a bush. Do not fear but approach and question the beast.’

Duni Chand went in the desired direction. After having gone a few miles, he thought he heard his name repeated amid piteous groans. He approached the spot from where the sound appeared to come. Lo ! A famished wolf lay groaning there. Presently, the wolf disappeared. A man stood there. Duni Chand saw before him his father in his habitual dress of old.

The materialized spirit of his father then told Duni Chand that nothing that had been given to the Brahmins had reached him. He was hungry as ever.

‘But how did you come into such a state ?’ asked Duni Chand.

‘My own deeds and desires,’ replied the materialized spirit, ‘have brought me to this miserable plight. Having lived a life of self-aggrandizement in the world, I acquired the character of a hungry wolf who always runs madly about, chasing his prey. No amount of wealth snatched from others satisfied me. Even during the last moments of my life on the earth, I thought of nothing but of the chances of further acquisition which I had failed to utilize or which my death would prevent me from utilizing. Thus, even after I passed over into this world, I could not shake off my desires. I am still the victim of my unsatisfied wolfish cravings. Now, through the grace of the divine personality that has sent you hither, I feel a cloud being lifted from my path. I discern a beam of light beckoning me to higher spheres. I must go. I thank you for this my deliverance; for it is your love that has drawn to your house the Master who has thus rescued me from my lower self. Look there ! He bids me go higher up. Remember, my son, that in this world of which I am an inhabitant now, man’s progress depends on the thoughts and feelings that he cherishes and cultivates, the actions that he performs, and the character that he thus develops while in human form. Pray for me. Give to the needy a portion of your honest earnings. That will benefit both you and me. Go and adore the divine spirit that sits incarnate in your house. He will give a new, real life unto you. Live that life, think those thoughts, cherish those feelings, and do those deeds, which he prescribes. You will be happy, both here and there.’

Duni Chand returned to his house. In awe and reverence he bowed at the Master’s feet and prayed for light. The Guru gave him a needle, saying, ‘Take this needle and keep it for me in a safe place. I shall take it back when we meet in the next world.’

Duni Chand was in a state of mental confusion. The meeting with his father’s spirit had greatly upset him. He was not in a fit condition to think just then. He took the needle mechanically. Going into the house he offered it to his wife, saying, ‘The Master wants us to keep it for him. He says he will get it back from us in the next world. We should be careful lest we should lose it.’

His wife was a pious, thoughtful woman. She said, ‘My lord, the Master has set us a riddle. How shall we take the needle with us to the other world ? All material things will remain here and our spirits will go alone. The Master must have a prepose behind this strange request. Perhaps he will solve the riddle of life for us. Let us go to him, give back the needle, and pray for light.’

Duni Chand and his wife went to Guru, placed the needle before him and begged him to take it back, 'We cannot carry it to the other world Master, though we would gladly carry heavy loads for you, if we could.'

The Guru smiled and said, 'What are those several flags which fly on the top of your house?'

Duni Chand, 'According to the prevalent custom, they represent the wealth that belongs to me. Each flag stands for ten million or one crore.'

Guru Nanak, 'So all this wealth is yours and you are amassing more. How will you manage to carry it with you to regions beyond death? Have you ever thought of the life to come and your needs in that life?'

Duni Chand and his wife bowed their heads and said, 'Pray, then, bid us what to do with this wealth. Tell us what we shall need in the life to come and how we can manage to carry it thither or get it there.'

Guru Nanak, 'Give this wealth to the needy and the poor. Earn an honest living with the sweat of your brow. Share your earnings with your needy neighbours. Love and serve all creatures as your brother and sister. Meditate on God and ever pray for His Grace. This wealth of Hari Name, of lofty, noble thoughts and pious, godly acts of love and service, will help you in the life to come.'

Thus were Duni Chand and his wife blessed with the gift of Hari Name. They became disciples of the Guru. They distributed their wealth to the poor, converted their house into a *dharmshala*-a place of love, charity, and devotion-, and took great delight in ministering to the spiritual and bodily needs of all who met them. They became the Guru's torch-bearers, and showed the right path to many a 'forlorn, shipwrecked brother sailing over life's solemn main'.

After a short further stay at Lahore, the Guru went to Talwandi. His old parents, who had so far regarded him as their errant son, were, during their visit, blessed with spiritual insight. They saw in him their spiritual guide and saviour. They gave up all thoughts of holding him within their four walls; for they realized that he was meant for the whole of suffering humanity. Rai Bular was also comforted in his last days.

Taking leave of his parents and disciples, the Guru started again on his mission. After a short tour of his native land, he took up his post on a secluded, beautiful spot on the right bank of the Ravi. There, in the lap of Nature, with a wide expanse of open, fertile land on one side and the slow-moving Ravi on the other, he lifted his voice in praise of God. He sang his

matchless Songs. He let his soul freely fly to the feet of the Lord and, for days together, cling to them in a calm rapture of heavenly bliss. People soon came to know of him. He sang to them of his Master, the Lord of the universe, and the good, loving Father of all. He sang to them of their duty to God on the one side, and their brethren, on the other. They heard his divine Songs. They listened to his inspired talks. Their hearts and souls melted in a sincere repentance for their past negligence. A thirst for the Lord was aroused in them. His Songs and discourses slaked this newborn thirst of their souls. They found their restless bosoms filled with ineffable joy. To lead a life of love, service, and devotion became the master-passion with them. They went about their duties with the Name of the Lord enthroned in their bosoms and the Word of God as sung by the Guru ever seated on their lips.

The Guru's fame spread far and wide. Hindus, Muhammadans, hermits, ascetics, anchorites, men of the world, *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, farmers, landlords, and the rest, all came to him and became his disciples. Purified in mind and heart, with their souls knit to the Father above, they shed all their mutual hatreds and jealousies, and began to live like brothers. A millionaire official named Duni Chand, popularly called Karori Mal or Karoria, who lived in a village nearby, began to depreciate the Guru. He did not like this change in the people. He was one of those 'natural leaders' of the people who had become tools of the tyrannical rule of the foreigners. He knew quite well that the authority of his masters would remain unquestioned and secure as long as the people remained ignorant base and low in personal character, and broken up by feuds and jealousy in public life. How could he welcome the uplifting, liberating, and unifying influence which the Guru was coming to exercise over the people ? He felt that by founding his 'association of God-fearing Republicans', the Guru was undermining his and his masters' authority. He determined to apprehend the Guru or to drive him away. Mounting on a horse and taking a posse of foot-men with him, Kororia started towards the Guru. But he could not go far. The people who heard of his resolve cursed him, some openly, and some in the secret of their hearts. Some took the courage to try to dissuade him. for a time he withstood all wise counsel. But his evil heart was soon in a violent agitation. His mind was in a whirlwing of confusion. He became bereft of his sight and senses. Even the animal under him, influenced by the waves of love emanating from the Guru's heart, refused to move. Kororia's people now advised him to go humbly to the Guru and seek his blessings. He

agreed at last. He alighted from his horse, bowed in the direction of the Guru, and started barefoot to meet the Master. Reaching there, he fell at the Guru's feet, His whole being got steeped in a joy that he had never known before. A blessing, abiding peace descended on his soul. He tasted the life of the spirit. For three days he remained with him, feasting his eyes on the glorious countenance of the Master, nourishing his soul on the Word of God that flowed like life-giving waters from the throat of the Master, and, in that holy company of Guru Nanak and his disciples, purifying his mind and heart of all low passions and ignoble desires.

CHAPTER 32

AT KARTARPUR

In honour of the Guru, in obedience to his wishes, and in commemoration of his own emancipation from sin, ignorance, and suffering, Karoria founded a village on the spot which the Guru had sanctified by his presence. He named it after the Master's Master, no doubt in obedience to the Guru's wishes, and called it Kartarpur¹ or the Village of God, the Creator. He also built a dharmshala or temple of God and house for the Guru. Both the temple and the village with the surrounding land, he dedicated to the Guru. Here the Master stayed for some time. He put off his extraordinary costume and adopted the usual dress of the people around him. 'With a cloth around his waist, a sheet over his shoulder, and a turban on his head, he looked the impersonation of holiness.'

In a short time the place grew in importance. Hearing of the Guru's settlement at Kartarpur, people came from far and near to pay their homage to him. Houses and *dharmshalas* were built and the village grew in size and population. His father with all his people, as well as the Guru's wife and sons, moved to and settled in the village.

Kartarpur became the seat of the Guru. Amidst chanting of hymns, morning and evening, and discourses by the Guru, the congregation grew larger and larger, and the free kitchen fed all who came. In the Guru's *langar* no distinction of caste or creed was observed. At this table of God all sat as brothers and sisters, as members of one well-knit family, in which all ministered to the needs and welfare of each, and each exerted himself ever to advance the good of all.

The Guru started a small farm which he cultivated by following the plough himself. Of course, his disciples also worked there. The Guru held that the right way to live was by the produce of one's own labour. The Guru produced not only enough for himself and his family, but also an abundant surplus which he gave to the free community-kitchen. 'In his own person he set the example of leading a simple house-holder's life and realizing the spirit

1. Like numerous other sacred places of the Sikhs, Kartarpur is now in Pakistan.

of true religion, devoted to God and the service of his fellowmen, combining simple life with lofty thoughts, free from outer shams and hypocrisies, metaphysical and philosophical pursuits which keep the mind from truth. By his own example he showed that by righteous living, even amidst gaiety and laughter, salvation could be obtained.'

One day a fanatical Brahmin came to the Guru and begged for alms. The Guru desired that he be taken to the community kitchen and given as much food as he needed. But the Brahmin refused to take food from the kitchen, saying that he would eat only what he had himself cooked in his own manner. 'The surface laver of the earth,' said he, 'is polluted. It has been touched and trodden on by all sorts and castes of people. I shall first dig up the earth to a depth of one cubit so that all surface impurities and pollution be removed. Then I shall make a cooking-square and plaster it with cow-dung. None but I shall enter that cooking-square. I shall wash the firewood before use with a view to removing the defilement caused by its having been touched by all sorts of creatures and so that no insect be burnt in it. The food in your kitchen has been cooked without any attention having been paid to these formalities. I cannot take it.'

The Guru remarked that the Brahmin had queer wrong notions about pollution and purity. All the same, he told him that he would give him uncooked viands which he might cook in his own way. He should first prepare a cooking-square for the purpose. The Brahmin went outside and began to dig up the earth. But wherever he dug, he found bones, which were more abominable to him than the Guru's food. He continued digging almost the whole day. At last, overcome by hunger and fatigue, he went and fell at the Guru's feet, and asked for the cooked food, which he had previously spurned. The Guru let him have his fill and said to him, 'Human touch does not defile food; nor is man defiled by food. Real defilement comes from evil thoughts and actions, and real purification is achieved by meditating on God's Name; driving out evil from the mind, and performing acts of virtue and charity.'

A Sikh named Kalu asked the Guru for a definition of a holy man. The Guru replied, 'He is holy in whom are found friendship, sympathy, pleasure at the welfare of others, and dislike of evil company. His intentions are pure. He serves the good and the needy. He honours those who impart to him good counsel and learning. He feels a constant craving for divine knowledge. He

loves his wife and abjures other women. He avoids all such subjects as may breed quarrels; for he is a man of peace. He honours and serves those who are superior to him in intelligence, merit, and devotion. Even if he be strong, he is not arrogant and does not trample on others. He shuns the society of the evil and seeks the society of the holy alone.'

Two Sikhs, named Bhagta and Ohri, asked the Guru how transmigration could be avoided and rest obtained. The Guru replied, 'By avoiding *manmukh karm* (perverse acts). What are they ? Listen ! To be envious of others, to desire that wealth and happiness should forsake others and come to oneself; to suffer pain at the success and prosperity of others; to regard others as one's enemies and do good to no one. All this evil must be expelled from the heart. Secondly, a *manmukh* is proud and relentless to everyone. If he sees someone inferior to him, he does not feel any sympathy for him, but laughs at him and treats him with contempt. He cannot bear to hear the praises of any one, and begins to slander him. He is obstinate and thinks himself to be wiser than others; hence he does not accept any advice, howsoever good and salutary. These vices-envy, pride, slander, and obstinacy characterize a *manmukh* or perverse person. They must be relinquished and their opposites owned and cultivated.'

A Sikh in very straitened domestic circumstances approached the Guru for help to marry off his daughter. The Guru sent one of his devotees, named Bhagirath, to fetch the needed articles from Lahore. He was told not to spend a night in that city. Bhagirath carried out the instructions with such meticulous care that the shopkeeper, named Mansukh, from whom he purchased the articles, and to whom he explained why he could not stay in Lahore for the night, felt a craving to see the Guru. On seeing and hearing the Guru, he became a devotee of his. He remained three years with the Guru, during which time he memorized many of the Guru's hymns. Then he returned to Lahore, sold everything he had in his shop, distributed much of his wealth to the poor, and went to Ceylon. There he practised and propagated his new faith. Raja Shivrabh of Ceylon was one of the converts made by him.

TOUR TO THE SOUTH : AT SARSA

We have seen that after returning from his first *Udasi* or tour, Guru Nanak had founded Kartarpur, and that his parents, wife, and sons had come and settled with him there. For some time he lived a householder's life among his family and devotees and also carried out his duties as the Divine Teacher of humanity. Thus, after having infused the spirit of Sikhism in the Panjabis' life, having established a Brotherhood of God-fearing republicans, and having set up a centre where his Divine Songs could be sung and recited, and where all who came would get totally transformed and become an inseparable part of the Sikh world, the Guru again decided to resume his travels in order to console, redeem, and enlighten humanity, in far off places. The call of humanity which had made him quit his home and family at Sultanpur was still ringing in his ears, reaching down to the depths of his divinely compassionate heart, and urging him to do his duty by God and His creatures. So he decided to leave his home and family once again and to undertake another long tour, this time to the South. Mardana was ordered to stay at Kartarpur and sing to the disciples and seekers the Divine Songs of the Master. Several noted Sikhs like Bhai Bhagirath also stayed behind to serve the people and preach to them, by precept and example, the lofty ideals which the Guru had not only set before them, but had actually shown them realized in his own life.

Taking with him two Gheo Jat Sikhs, named Saido and Siho, the Guru started towards towards the South in about 1510 A.D. His dress was extraordinary this time, too. He wore wooden sandals on his feet; twisted a rope round his head, arms, and legs; took a *faqir's* staff in his hand; and put a patch and streak on his forehead. Thus quaintly dressed, he proceeded to the South. Passing through Bhatner, Bhatinda, etc., he reached Sarsa in the modern district of Hissar. There he met a group of Muhammadan *faqirs* who were generally believed to possess great occult powers and were, consequently, held in great awe by the people of that locality. They misled the ignorant people,

whom they taught to look upon *faqirs* and *Mullas* as their saviours. Like other *faqirs*, they, too, did all they could to bring Hindus into the fold of Islam.

They had heard a good deal about Guru Nanak and his achievements in having vanquished and subdued well-known *Faqirs* and *Jogis*. When they learnt that he had come to their city, they put their heads together to plan how to act. They resolved to meet him and defeat him in penance, argument, and occult powers. They gathered around him. The chief among them were *Khwaja Abdul Shakur*, *Pir Bahawal Haq*, *Shah Nawaz*, *Farid-ud-Din*, *Jati Lal*, *Jalal Din*, and *Lal Mati*. *Pir Bahawal Haq* was their leader. All of them came resolved to defeat the Guru and, thereby, to augment their own influence as the conquerors of one who had, till then, conquered all whom he had met. They would thus be doing a service not only to themselves and their fellow *faqirs*, but also to the cause of Islam; for the Guru's teachings were already becoming an obstacle in the free spread of Islam. So, desiring to lower him in the eyes of the people, the *faqirs* asked the Guru if he had performed penances and fasts worthy of a man of religion. The Guru replied that he had no need for them. 'Penance and fasts', said he, 'are useful when over-indulgence in sensual pleasures has spoiled the body or soiled the heart. They can be of help in the task of purifying the mind and heart and cleaning the body of unhealthy, disease-producing elements. But they are ever to be regarded as mere means to an end. It is wrong to make penances the be all and the end of all religious life. It is a sin to torture and deform the body and to cripple and crush the human heart. How can the soul be strong when its vehicle is made unfit for its work? Of course, it is equally bad to starve the soul and pamper the body. The mind of man is restless like a wild deer that ever runs after soft, delicate blades of grass. It is ever on the wing in pursuit of this or that object. It has to be controlled, no doubt. But the way of penance chosen by you is too arduous to be undertaken by all. Moreover, it is not fit a means to achieve the desired success; for it is generally found the men given to penances and renunciation of the world's things, begin to feel proud of their performances. They begin to deride others who cannot go the same way or length with them. A heart full of pride, contempt, and hate, is altogether ill-fitted to receive the Divine Guest. Mine is a far easier and surer path. I believe that when the Love for the Lord gets a foot-hold in the heart of man, he cannot be allured by the idle, sensual pleasures of this world. His mind and heart, in fact, all his faculties, are then directed in one channel-the path that leads to the Abode of the Blissful Lord.

A man in whom Divine Love has awakened, whose parched soul has become athirst for God, can never go astray. All his senses are completely under his control. He can live on elements finer than the air, and without food as we know it. Yes, he can dispense with food and sleep for as long as he likes, and still feel no discomfort. Therefore, he abhors penances and self-tortures. Rather than cripple and disable the body, he employs it in the service of his fellows.'

The Muhammadan *faqirs* realized that they could not defeat him in argument. So they invited him to join them in a forty-day fast and penance; for they believed that he would not be able to bear thirst and hunger for so long. The Guru wanted to humble their pride so that they might be in mood to listen to his Word of God. So he said, 'Let it be as you please'. All of them, thereupon, retired into as many cells, each taking with him a jug of water and forty grains of oats. The Guru dispensed even with these. The *faqirs*, of course, took special care to post trusted watchmen at the door of the Guru's cell to guard against his receiving any food during the period of the penance. After forty days the *faqirs* came out, lean and famished. But the Guru was hale and hearty as before. Rather, the continuous, undisturbed communion with the Giver and Sustainer of life, which he had enjoyed for forty days, had added fresh glory to his face and new strength to his body. When the *faqirs* saw this, they felt convinced of the truth of his words that man lives not by bread alone; that substances finer than the air can sustain a person who is imbued with the Name. They owned defeat. They admitted that the Guru's technique and practice in this field were superior to theirs in all respects. They fell at his feet and begged for light. He bestowed on them the gift of the Name and awakened them into the true life of the spirit. He taught them how to live in the world, derive the needed nourishment from it, and yet be ever above it, verily the lotus in water.

As we have noted a number of times, it was Guru Nanak's usual but novel wont to seek out such persons who were themselves misguided and were misguiding their followers. He met such people and brought them on to the right path. The parctical effect of their conversion was that thousands of their followers were automatically converted to the right path. They, too, got the light, and began to live the right sort of life. Hence, by correcting and reclaiming the *faqirs* of Sarsa, the Guru cured them of their bigotry and their craze for gaining power and influence. Their conduct towards the people also

underwent a great change. The people felt relieved and were blessed with new light on life's problems and difficulties.

One of the *faqirs* of Sarsa one, named Lal Mati, became a full fledged disciple of the Guru and did much to spread the Guru's message and preach his faith among the people.

The Guru stayed there for over four months. On that site stands a Gurdwara in commemoration of his visit and victory. The cells of the *faqirs* are also pointed out to the pilgrims to this day.

JAIN PRIESTS AND PIR MAKHDUM

From Sarsa the Guru proceeded towards Bikaner and visited some of its important places. Bikaner was then a stronghold of Jains. Many of those people met the Guru and had discussions with him. Jains believe in *ahimsa* or non-killing. They consider it an act of religious merit to avoid taking the life of even the meanest or the foulest creature. This creed of non-killing has become a sort of superstition with them. They would not bathe, would not kill even lice, and would scatter their own excreta so that worms may not be produced in it; for they are sure to die later. They filtered water before drinking it. They forget that innumerable invisible living things are there even in the filtered water.

The Guru told them that true religion did not consist in remaining unwashed and dirty. 'Cleanliness', said he "is next to godliness. You cannot be godly or religious if you are dirty. You cannot please God unless you free your body and mind from every form of filth and dirt. A pure mind in a pure, clean body is the quintessence of all religious practice.'

The Guru advised them to give up senseless and ridiculous practices which sprang from their over-zealousness to avoid killing at all costs and in all forms. He told them in what true religion consisted. He taught them the fundamentals of his religion and set them to lead a life of useful activity in the midst of their fellow-beings.

During his travels in this part of the country, Guru Nanak arrived at a famous Jain Temple. Its custodian, Narbhi, went with a disciple of his to visit the Guru. Narbhi learnt that the Guru did not have the same tender scruples regarding the value of life in every form as the Jains had. So he began to catechise the Guru, 'Do you eat stale or fresh bread, old or new corn?' 'Do you take cold unfiltered water? Do you shake trees of the forest to get their fruit? Who is your guru, and what power has he to pardon you since you violate all rules and destroy life?'

1. That is, do you eat food or corn with worms in it or not?

All these questions were intended to ridicule the Guru for claiming to be a man of religion without accepting non-killing as the basic principle of life and conduct. He wanted to make the Guru feel perturbed at the thought that, by not observing the rules as adopted by the Jains, he would be damned. The Guru replied that he, too, believed in non-violence, in the sense that we should do no harm to our fellow-creatures, inflict no pain on them, and take not their life, but the Jains were trying to do the impossible; for it was absolutely impossible to avoid 'killing of living things' if we wanted to keep alive. Our eating, drinking, and breathing involve killing of innumerable little living things.

On hearing this the priest said that the Guru was hopelessly sinful and lost. The Guru replied that he had no fears on that score, that he was sure that if he could win the grace of the Merciful Father, he would be saved and blessed.

Then the Guru launched on satire on the Jains. He said, 'My brother, you have adopted a totally wrong course. Your superstitious concern for life in every form leads you to commit absurdities and adopt abominable, dirty practices. For example, you get your hair plucked like the sheep. You drink dirty water, beg and eat others' leavings. Instead of fresh, clean water you put ashes on your heads. You do not wash yourselves. You are ever filthy, day and night you shun fresh, wholesome food. You spread out your faces and inhale its foul smell. All these dirty practices are abominable, nay, definitely irreligious. Why shun or despise fresh, clean flowing water, which gives and sustains life. Water is held in esteem by all civilized people. From water rose the fourteen gems; all places of pilgrimage are located on river-banks. Water washes us clean and imparts freshness and vigour to our body and mind. Hindus, Muslims and others bathe before engaging in worship or prayer; for thereby concentration of mind is facilitated. As for destroying life, who can avoid doing so? Is there anything used by man without life? Flowers, leaves, and fruits have life. Water, corn, milk, butter, and curd-all have life. Living beings live by consuming living things. Not by shunning fresh, wholesome food and fresh, clean water, but by adopting the path of virtue and wisdom, can we obtain emancipation.'

Here is rendering of the hymn which he then composed on the occasion to embody his views :-

'They get their hair plucked out, drink dirty water, and beg and eat others' leavings;

They spread out their ordure, they inhale its foul smell, they shy away from pure clean water;

They get their heads plucked like sheep, the pluckers' hands being smeared with ashes; They have given up the occupations of their parents; their families weep and wail; When they die, no rice balls on leafy plates are offered, no earthen lamps are lighted, and no funeral rites are performed¹

The sixty-eight places of pilgrimage grant them no access; the Brahmins will not eat their food.

They are ever filthy, day and night, and have no sacrificial marks on their foreheads. They ever sit close together in silence, as if they were in mourning, and they make no appearance in public places.

They have begging-bowls in their hands; they have brooms² by their sides; they walk in single file.

They are not *Jogis* or *Jangams*, or *Qazis*, or *Mullas*.

They are given up by the Lord and they go about aimlessly; the whole tribe is lost. God alone kills and restores animals to life; none else can preserve them.

They bestow not charity, nor perform ablutions; let dust or ashes be thrown on their plucked heads.

Out of water emerged gems when Meru was made the churning staff.³

The gods created the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage, where men gather on holy days and holy discourses are held.

The Muslims offer prayers after bathing; the Hindus, too, perform worship after ablution; the wise do ever bathe.

At birth and at death men are washed with water for the benefit of their souls.

Nanak, they who get their heads plucked are devils; these things⁴ please them not.

When it rains, there is joy everywhere; in water lies the key to all life;

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1. The Jains conform in many ways to Hindu customs. The Guru here censures them for not being altogether consistent.
 2. To brush aside insects and thus avoid treading on them.
 3. According to the Hindus, Vishnu, in his Kurmavtar, assumed the shape of a Tortoise which supported the mountain Mandara in the Sikh writings called Meru-, the Olympus of the Hindus, with which the gods churned the ocean. From the oceans were produced the fourteen gems or jewels here referred to. They are Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu, the moon, a white horse with seven heads, a holy physician, a prodigious elephant, the tree of plenty, the all-yielding coe, etc.' (Macauliffe. p. 151, f. n. 3.)
 4. That is, water and bathing.

When it rains, corn and sugarcane grow, as also cotton which provides covering to all.

When it rains, kine graze and housewives churn their milk.

By the use of ghee thus obtained burnt offerings and sacred feasts are celebrated and worship is ever adorned.

The Guru is the sea, the disciples are rivers ; by bathing in the sea glory is obtained.

But, Nanak, if the plucked heads bathe not, let dust be thrown on their heads.'

Majh ki Var.

On hearing the Guru's discourse and hymn, the Jain priest fell at the Guru's feet, and became a convert to his faith. On that occasion the Guru completed his hymns included in *Majh ki Var*. Saido and Siho wrote them down from his dictation.

PIR MAKHDUM

During his further travels, the Guru met a Muslim Pir, named Makhdum Baha-ud-Din Quraishi, who had an extravagant idea of his own spiritual and temporal importance and was very proud of his miraculous powers. He proudly exhibited some miracles to the Guru. The latter was pained at the *Pir's* hypocrisy, and said, 'You pose to be a spiritual person, and yet, instead of praising and glorifying God, you are magnifying your own ego or self, and exhibiting pride and vanity. The way of God is the way of humility and self-effacement. He who gets fond of his own praise loses all merit and displeases God. Correct yourself in time. Don't waste your life in such vain pursuits.'

The Guru's words went home. The *Pir* took this censure to heart. He fell at the Guru's feet, and begged him to stay with him for some more time and help him back to God's path. The Guru bestowed on him the priceless gift of the Name and re-started on his travels.

CHAPTER 35

KAUDA, THE CANNIBAL

From Bikaner the Guru moved on to Ajmer. That place was a stronghold of *Yogis* and Muslim *Sufi Faqirs*. He held religious discourses with the leading men of both. He told them the right way to win God's pleasure. He told the *Yogis* how one could practise true Yoga, and to the *Sufis* he taught how to lead a life truly in keeping with the basic tenets of Islam. As we know already, the burden of his teachings was to regard all human beings as the off-spring of the Father above and, hence, as brothers and sisters, to despise or hate none on the score of a difference in faith, to earn an honest living, to do good to others, to ever meditate on God, to bring others on the right path, and to share one's earnings with the poor and the needy.

From Ajmer, he moved further south. Passing through Jaisalmir, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udhepur, Indore, Hoshangabad, etc., he crossed the river Nerbada and entered Maharashtra. After a tour of that country, he went onwards and reached Narsinghpur. It was inhabited by people called *Vanjaras*. The only son of their Chief had died just then. The whole city was in mourning. The Guru sang to them some of his quieting, soothing, inspiring, uplifting Songs. Their grief was assuaged. They became reconciled to the Will of God, the Giver and Taker of life and everything else. The whole clan of *Vanjaras* entered the Path. Their descendants hold him in high esteem to this day.

The Guru continued his missionary tour further into the Deccan. He visited all important places on the way. Whenever he heard of misguided men wielding and misusing religious or secular authority, or misleading an oppressing the people under them, he made it his special duty to visit and reform such oppressors and false, blind leaders. He was told that, in a wide wilderness thereabouts, there lived a tribe of cannibals. Kauda was their chief. Their inroads into the surrounding territory had thrown the people into panic. The Guru's compassionate heart was touched. The divine call, which had ever been urging him on, he now felt to be pointing out to him the cannibals' dens. When his new disciples tried to dissuade him from his contemplated journey into the land of the man-eaters, he replied, 'Why friends, there are many

thirsty souls there that need the Nectar. Shall I go by without ministering to their needs ? I shall go to them; for they need me.' When they said, 'They will kill and eat you', he quietly replied, 'Then their physical hunger will be satisfied, though I should prefer to satisfy the hunger of their souls. Fear not, God is great and merciful. I shall do my duty by them.'

So he made for the place where Kauda, the chief of the cannibals, was reported to have his ambush. The place was reached. Kauda rejoiced to behold three well-fed men approaching his den. He smacked his lips and began his preparations to receive the 'victims'. They came up and stood looking at him. He had planned to spring on them and hold them fast; but now nothing of the sort was necessary. They showed no signs of any intention to flee. He felt the oil. The fire seemed to have lost its heat; for the oil was even cooler than it had been before the fire had been lit. At last, despairing of ever being able to make the oil boil, and wondering at the strange experience, he decided to roast one of his victims directly on the fire. Finding the Guru to be nearest, he caught him in his arms. The Guru smiled and said, '*Sat Kartar*'. Kauda was puzzled. None of his victims had ever behaved thus before. He threw him into the fire. It did not burn him. He stood in the fire, smiling at Kauda. The chief of the cannibals could withstand no longer the charm of that smile. A mild shiver went through his body. The Guru stepped out of the fire¹. Kauda made no effort to push him back. His mind seemed to have lost all power to think and initiate action, just as the fire had lost its power to burn. He stood in mute stupefaction. Presently, he looked up at his strange 'victim'. He found that his face was bright with a glory that he had nowhere seen before; that the strange man of glory stood with eyes shut and face upraised. In this posture, he looked the very image of Peace and Bliss. A sweet, melodious voice was then heard lifted into a divine song. Kauda sat with folded hands. A heavy, crushing weight seemed to be slowly rising from over his breast. A dark, thick, terrible cloud seemed to be bursting before him to admit refreshing rays of light into the murky chamber of his inhuman heart. Something previously dead within him seemed to come into life. He felt the lighting of a holy flame within his heart. Kauda found his lost spiritual faculty and the Master found his lost disciple. Kauda bowed at the Guru's feet. The touch of those feet

1. Modern psychic and spiritual research shows that such things do and can happen in these days, too. See Appendix B.

sent a fresh thrill through his body and rekindled his soul. He begged the Guru to teach him how to live and work for emancipation. 'Make me your own, O Master', said he, 'so that I may, with safety, sail across this terrible ocean of birth and death. Siho initiated him by giving him to drink some water which the Guru had touched with his foot. The Guru stayed with him for some days and taught him the right way to win peace and happiness here and deliverance hereafter. Entrusting Kauda with the duty of reclaiming others of his tribe, the Guru moved on. From a killer and eater of men Kauda became a teacher and servant of all his fellow-beings.

CHAPTER 36

RAJA SHIVNAB OF CEYLON

After a circuitous tour through the chief cities and holy places of the Deccan, the Guru reached Cape Comorin. From there he crossed over to Ceylon. Raja Shivnabh of Jaffna had heard of the Guru from a merchant Sikh and had become his devoted disciple. The Guru's Songs of God sung to him by that merchant, Munsukh, had soothed his heart but had, also, stirred his soul with a powerful longing to see the Heavenly Singer who sang of the Great Bounteous Lord in such inspired and inspiring words. All that the merchant had told him about the Guru had only served to whet the edge of the Raja's yearning to see the Master. He had wanted to accompany Mansukh to the Panjab and lay himself at the Guru's feet. But Mansukh had counselled him to love and wait in faith. 'The Master is drawn', said he, 'across great distances by the invisible string of his disciples' love. Only, let the love be deep, steady, and sincere. He will as surely come to you as the sun will rise again in the east tomorrow. He does not like that people should neglect or give up their daily duties in their uncontrolled zeal for a life of the spirit. He would like you to carry on your kingly duties in a spirit of love and service. Besides, who knows to what regions he might have gone? He is ever on the wing in pursuance of his self-chosen, heaven ordained task of saving mankind from the clutches of its evil propensities. So, as I said, love and wait. If you concentrate your mind and, with purity of heart, pray for his presence, he will not fail to fulfil your true desire. He will come. The force of your love will draw him to your place, wherever he be. Have faith and patience. They will get their reward.'

Raja Shivaabh had accepted the advice. He had begun to love, pray, and wait. Every morning and every night before going to sleep, he had prayed earnestly for the Guru to reveal himself to him in person. Having been told that the Guru loved to stay out under open skies, away from the hustle and bustle of human habitations, the Raja had planted a grove of shade trees for the Guru's sojourn. The thing had got wind. Many imposters had come, posed as

the Guru, and stayed in the grove. But all of them had failed to satisfy the yearning of his soul. The imposters had made him cautious. Thenceforth, he had issued orders that all who came to his city, posing as Guru Nanak, should be subjected to various tests. Rich food and drinks of all sorts were provided. Beautiful damsels were sent to dance before them, to serve them, and to use their arts with them. None had been able to withstand these temptations. Shivrabb's despair had grown deeper with the lapse of time.

It was at such a time of doubts and despair that the Guru reached there and took his seat in the grove. Attracted by the divine music and the magnetic personality of the Guru, people came to him in large numbers. Shivrabb had been duped many times in the past. He would not go himself, or believe the stranger to be the Guru, until he had tried and tested him. So he ordered two of his prettiest and cleverest court-dancing-girls to visit the Guru and tempt him with their wiles and charms. If they failed to entice him, then would he himself visit the holy man.

The girls almost danced into the grove, dressed in gay garments, full of laughter and mischief, carrying baskets, full of flowers to offer to the Guru, sure of conquest, proud of their beauty and the magic of their blandishments and passionate music to charm and conquer him as they had done in the case of others. None else was allowed to enter. The Guru and his companions were thus left alone with the unholy, beautiful young charmers. The Guru looked up with a stern, loveful look, as a father looks at a prankish, erratic child, and bade them sit and think of God. Those who had come to conquer were themselves conquered on beholding the Master's Glory. The Guru's look penetrated deep into the depth of their hearts and cleansed them of all their evil inclinations. They bowed before the Guru, experienced a sense of elation unknown before, and returned transfigured to their master, the king.

Shivrabb had only to look at their faces to convince himself. Their eyes were bright with a strange delight. Their faces glowed with the radiance of the divine spark which, hidden so long in the depths of their hearts, had now been fanned into life by the Guru's holy breath. Shivrabb needed no further tests. 'At last he has come', said he, and danced in glee. He took his son and queen with him and went to the garden. The damsels were right. The sight of the Guru's loving, peaceful, radiant, inspiring countenance was enough to lay all doubts at rest, and to soothe and quieten all thoughts of despair. It was He,

the long-exptected Divine Guest. He laid himself prostrate at the Guru's feet. A thrill of new life and joy passed through his whole being. All vain, wandering and restless longings of the heart were laid at rest for ever. His faith and patient waiting were rewarded. The Master himself had come across numerous forests and rivers, and over several thousand miles of wild, desolate land, to fulfil the loveful longing of his desciple. The thought made him cling to the Master's feet still more fervently and wash them with tears of joy and gratitude.

The prince and the queen also bowed at the Guru's feet and obtained his blessings. All the three rose at the bidding of the Guru. For a pretty long time they sat quietly, feasting their eyes, heart and souls with the heavenly sight before them; enjoying the holy presence through every cell and pore of their bodies, and inhaling unutterable joy at every breath. At last, the king took courage to break this blissful silence. With folded hands he said, 'Grant me light, O Master. I have waited for years and years.'

The Guru said, 'I have come across all this distance in response to your steadfast, devotion. I know that you were waiting for me.'

The *Raja* then asked 'From your dress, it is difficult to judge whether you are a *Jogi*, a Brahmin, or a householder. What path do you follow ?'

The Guru replied with the hymn given below :-

The *Jogi* who knows the secret of the pure Name, has not a particle of uncleanness;

The True Beloved Lord is ever with him and he escapes birth and death.

O God, what is your Name and how can it be comprehended ?

If Thou call me unto Thy Presence, I would get this doubt removed.

A Brahmin is he who is soaked in knowledge of God, who worshippeth God by ever singing His praises, and

Who meditates on the Name of the Lord whose light illumines the three worlds. Make the heart the scales, thy tongue the beam, and weigh the unweighable Name.

The Lord's gate is the shop and He Himself is its owner; dealers in Name alone gather at that shop.

The True Guru saves at both ends, here and hereafter.

But he alone understands it who is attened to the One Lord and whose mind wavers not.

He inscribes the Word in his mind, serves God day and night, and has ended all his doubts.

Above all is the sky (the Tenth Door), wherein abides the Lord.

And wherein dwells also the Unfathomable Guru.

Through the Guru's Word, whether I am at home or abroad is the same to me;

Nanak has become truly detached, an anchorite par excellence.'

Rag Maru.

In this hymn the Guru stressed the point that men of religion, under whatever name they might choose to be known, were in fact worshippers of the same One God, and were as it were, dealers in the same commodity, the Name of the Lord.

The *Raja* bowed and said, 'Forgive me, O true Guru. I am impelled to ask questions which people generally ask to resolve their doubts. Your words are like shafts of light which pierce and dispel darkness.'

'Ask whatever you wish to ask', said the Guru. 'I am here to remove all your doubts and to lead you on to the true path.'

'I should like', said the *Raja*, 'to have answers to the following questions : From where does the soul of man come and where does it go ? What is its source and to what does it return after death ? How is it bound ? How is it freed ? How does it become one with the Lord Eternal ?'

The Guru answered with a hymn in which he at first puts the questions and then answers them :-

'Man is born and then dies, O wherefrom he comes ?

What is his source and to what does he return ?

How does he merge in the Eternal Lord in the natural way ?

He who has the nectar of Name in the heart and in the mouth¹ and who dwells on God's Name, becomes detached like Him.

Then he comes and goes in the natural way.

He is born because of the desires and tendencies of the mind and merges in Him again for the same reason.

Through the Guru's instructions one is emancipated and is not bound again.

He ever ponders on the Name and achieves deliverance through the Name.

On the tree of the world many birds flock together for the night's stay.

Of them some are happy and others are miserable;

1. That is, who ever utters the name.

Attachments in the mind are the cause of ruin;

As the night ends, they look up at the sky again and the same fluttering of heart starts again;

Then they wander about in all directions according to the writ of their *Karma*.

But they who are merged in the Name regard the world as a temporary shelter in a pasture during the rainy season.

And, shedding their lust and anger, break the pitcher of the poisonous *Maya*.

Without the capital stock of the Name, the home and the shop are empty.

But when the Guru meets, he opens the closed gates of true vision.

In consequence of pre-destined union, one meets the true teacher.

The men of God are perfect and are ever happy in Truth.

They who surrender their Will and their body to God in the natural way.

Nanak, touch feet, for they are worthy of reverence.'

Rag Gauri.

The *Raja*'s questions were answered to his satisfaction and his doubts were all removed. He was completely converted and he accepted the Guru as his Light-giver. He then said to the Guru, 'Having come so far to bless your unworthy but lucky slaves, will you go a little further? Will you enter the city and sanctify with your presence the home of your happy slaves?'

'No, friend', replied the Guru, 'I am all right here'. But the king persisted in his entreaties. The Guru smiled and said, 'All right, I shall go; but won't go on foot.'

'Why should you walk, Master? A horse, a horse and six, or an elephant, or whatever else you desire, shall be sent for.' 'But I should like to ride on the back of a king.'

'Nothing more pleasant or blissful, my Master. Come, I shall blithely carry you on my back through the city, so that all may know the immensity of my joy.'

Shivnabh at once sat in the necessary posture and invited the Guru to be true to his word and ride on his back. The Guru was glad at the *Raja*'s devotion and self-surrender. He bade him go and build a *dharmshala* near the palace. He would go there when it was ready. The building was soon completed. The Guru went and took his lodgings there. People now flocked to the place in order to listen to his soul-stirring, peace-giving, joy-inspiring Songs of the Lord. The whole city and the suburbs bowed before the Guru and became his disciples. *Raja* Shivnabh, as the most devoted of

them all, was entrusted with the duty of preaching the Master's mission in the country.

After a short stay the Guru bade farewell to the *sangat* there and made a tour of the whole island. In all place he was listened to with reverence and delight. The whole population of the places visited by him embraced his faith and began to sing the Word of God as given to them by him. Sikh *sangats* came to exist in all places visited by the Guru and Sikh temples were erected in many of them. One such temple exists at Colombo.

During his stay with *Raja Shivrabh* the Guru composed the *Prasangli*, a metrical composition 'containing an account of the silent palace of God, the manner of meditating an account of the silent palace of God, the manner of meditating on Him, the private utterances of the Guru, and the nature of the soul and body.' It was taken down by one or other of his two companions, When the Guru departed from *Shivrabh*, he left the *Pransangli* there with the instruction that if anybody comes for it from the Panjab, a copy thereof was to be given over to him. When *Guru Arjan*, the fifth Guru, began to collect the writings of his predecessors for the compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib*, he sent *Bhai Paira* to Ceylon to bring him the above-said composition of *Guru Nanak*.

We do not, however, find it in *Guru Granth Sahib*, probably the copy which *Bhai Paira* brought was not the genuine one or was incomplete and was, therefore, rejected by *Guru Arjan*.

On his return, *Bhai Paira* narrated his experiences and observations of his long journey. A gist of the narrative was taken down by *Bhai Banno* in his copy of *Guru Granth Sahib* under the caption '*Haqiqa Rah Mukam*', and exists to this day. A copy thereof is 'appended to a manuscript copy of *Guru Granth Sahib* found by *Henry Erskine*, in the battle-field of *Gujrat*, 1849, now preserved in the British Museum, under Or, 1125.'¹ This manuscript belongs to *Akbar's* time and affords a very valuable record from the historical point of view, as it establishes certain points beyond all doubts, *e.g.* the visit of *Guru* to the Deccan and Ceylon, the establishment of several centres of the Sikh faith in those parts (which were quite flourishing at the time of *Bhai Paira's* visit and some of which exist to this day), and the fact of *Raja Shivrabh's* having

1. *Teja Singh Ganda Singh*, p. 9.fn.

embraced Sikhism. At the time of Bhai Paira's visit, a grandson of Shivrabh was the ruler of the place. A free kitchen was being run at the *Dharmshala* which Shivrabh had built for the Guru. Thousands were fed there everyday. Bhai Paira found a good many centres of Sikhism in the Deccan, where the Guru was fondly loved and remembered by thousands who sang his Songs and devoutly followed the path which he had shown to them.

CHAPTER 37

RETURN FROM THE SOUTH KAJLI BAN, BHARTHARI JOGI

Thereafter the Guru retraced his steps. Taking ship at Japapatan (Jaffna), he crossed over to the mainland, passing through Rameshwaram, Nagapatam, Tanjaur, Begumpura, etc., he made a tour of the locality. He visited all important places. Everywhere people came flocking to him. They saw the divine glory of his countenance, heard his Songs of the Lord, and became transfigured in heart, mind, and soul. They found glowing in their own hearts the divine spark in search of which they had vainly run so long after *Yogis*, *Pirs*, and *Pandits*. At a graceful glance from the Guru they learnt the art of living pure and unpolluted amid and impurities, allurements, and pollutions of the world. Everywhere the Guru established a *Dharamsala* or *Manji* and entrusted the work of reclaiming others to the most devoted of the disciples in each locality. Many of those *Dharamsalas* exist to this day.

At a distance of about a hundred miles from Bijapur there was dense forest called Kajli Ban. The Guru learnt that in that forest there was big, well-known Yogi *Ashram* or home of the Yogis. The *Siddhas* of supernatural powers, by displays of severe self-tortures, and by playing upon the people's superstitions in various other ways, the Yogis had made themselves objects of awe and worship. Fearing their wrath, and, at the same time, hoping to gain the objects of their worldly desires, the people of the surrounding locality made big offerings at the shrine of the *Siddhas* or *Yogis*. If they failed to supply all needs of the *Siddhas*, the latter knew how to exact what they wanted. Thus they were a type of oppressors who lived as parasites on the earnings of others.

To release the people from the snare of such pseudo-religious persons, to liberate such misguiding oppressors from the bondage of their benumbing, soul-killing practices, and to awaken them all to a true life of the spirit, was ever the Guru's desire. So he directed his steps towards the Yogis' Home. Reaching there, he sat a little way off from the main gate. It was a secluded spot in the lap of Nature. Listening to the rich music of the million throated

Nature, contemplating the beautiful scenery which lay spread before him in an immense variety of hue and form, the Guru let his collected soul rise to the bosom of the lord. He sat for hours in an ecstasy of unspeakable calm and joy. At the break of day, people from the neighbourhood came to the shrine to make their offerings to the *Siddhas* and obtain their blessings. As they passed by the Guru and his two companions, they felt a subtle, strong desire to sit by the lovely strangers and feast their eyes on the glorious countenance of the Guru. Some of them obeyed the mysterious, new-born inclination of their hearts, and sat around the Guru. Sitting there, they found such sweet joy in a mute contemplation of the Guru's person, that they forgot all about their intended, customary visit to the Yogis' Home. Several others assembled round the Guru on their return from the shrine.

Soon, the *Siddhas* of the *Ashram* came to know of the mysterious, quaintly dressed stranger who had, without uttering a word, drawn and kept, as if spell-bound, scores of their devotees. Their chief, whose name was Bharthari, came out to have a look at the stranger. But a glance told him that the stranger was no stranger but the one for whom he had been waiting since long. In one of his trances this great Yogi had learnt of Guru Nanak's advent into the world and had received and assurance that he would come to the *Ashram* and remove his doubts and clear his vision. Bharthari Yogi approached the Guru, saluted him with a bow, and, sitting before him, enquired, 'O great one, what is thy name, what thy country, and what is it that has brought thee hither?' One of the Guru's companions replied, 'He is Guru Nanak; the whole world is his country; and his occupation is to go from place to place, from land to land, giving to all the message of the Lord from Whom he has come, and awakening them to a life of the spirit.' Bharthari's eyes sparkled with joy; for he found that his intuition had not deceived him. He bowed in gratitude and said, 'God be thanked that I have seen thee at last. Long and intense has been my waiting for thee.'

The Guru welcomed him with a benign smile. The Yogi then continued, 'severe and long have been the penances which I have performed in order to cleanse my heart and mind of all earthly longings; for without such cleansing, it is impossible to get absorbed in worship and devotion. But, in spite of all my efforts, I feel not the joy that should come from a sense of union with the object of worship, or even from a conviction that one is on the right path leading to such a union. If Yoga is thus futile, what else has to be done to slake the soul's thirst for the Lord? We Yogis, drink wine in order to forget the world

and its burdens and temptations. thus we try to concentrate our thoughts on the Eternal Reality. But that method, too, is not quite efficacious; for, when the effect of the wine is gone, we are as far away as ever from the joy that is to had in poise and clam. Is it possible to cultivate an attitude of constant, unbroken detachment from the world ? For without such an attitude towards the world, it is impossible to grow and develop the love of the Lord in our hearts. Thus I find myself in a fix. Yoga with all its practrces has failed to take me towards the goal. Should I give it up ? But in favour of what other mode of worship, is the question. I feel it in my heart that you will free me from these doubts and set me on the right path. Will you have pity on me and do so ?

The Guru replied to the questions of Bharthari in two Songs in *Rag Asa* which are incorporated in *Guru Granth Sahib*. They may be freely rendered as below :

‘O veteran seeker after attunement, learn that to attune one’s self to the Supreme Reality is to attain to a state of natural and everlasting poise, union, and harmony. But this state is not to be attained by performance of austerities and penances. Meditation on the Eternal Lord is the means of this eternal attunement, which then becomes a part of man’s nature and a perfectly natural and effortless condition. In your system of *Hath Yoga*, the fruit of the desired attunement is a prolongation of life; but, by being ever in tune with the Infinite in the manner that I prefer, man enjoys the bliss of Supreme Knowledge. The Eternal Name, which is the never-failing means of obtaining everlasting attunement, is to be had by hearkening to the Guru’s Word of God, by making it pierce and hold the mind and heart as your ear-rings pierce and hold your ears. With the Word of God enthroned in the heart and soul, the seeker has to put on the garb of charity, forgiveness, and sweet humility in his dealings with his fellowmen. Whatever happens to him, or occurs all round him, he implicitly takes as the doing of the Father above, and bows before His Will; for he knows and feels that all that He does is good and for good. This is *Sahaj Yoga*, the natural, effortless, everlasting attunement, whose fruit is Supreme Poise and Bliss. Instead of the various postures of the body enjoined in your yoga, I advocate the restraining of the mind from evil, futile thoughts. The sweet notes, which you blow on your horn, morning and evening, I replace by the sweet music which ever plays in the soul on account of its steady, steadfast attunement with the Lord. Instead of keeping a staff and a dry, hollowed-out pumpkin in the hand, I put my mind under the control

of clarified intellect and keep the latter under check by means of the Supreme Knowledge, obtained through the Guru's grace. To regard the allurements and attachments of the world as insignificant as the dust is to smear the body with ashes. Ever to sing the praises of the Lord should be the constant occupation of the seeker. My renunciation consists in surrendering the will and intellect to the guidance of the Divine Will, to discern the manifestation of the Light of the Supreme Lord in all the countless forms and hues of the creation, to be ever in the tune with the Infinite Lord of the universe, is the *Sahaj Yoga*, O Bharthari, which I advise all seekers of God to follow.

'My friend, let thy mind drink the nectar of His Name, and, thus intoxicated, remain ever equipoised and full of joy. Keep thy soul lovingly attached to the Lord. In this way, you will ever hear an eternal, harmonious melody in the heart of thy heart. Instead of wine distilled from a fermented mixture of brown sugar, back of the Kikar tree, and some flowers, make a heavenly drink out of Divine Knowledge, noble acts, a constant hunger of the Lord felt in the soul, and an all-embracing, active and steadfast love for all His creatures. A cup of such divine drink is not to be had by self-tortures and austerities, but by resigning one's will to the Will of God and remaining ever in an attitude of faith and hope. The Lord gives it to him on whom He showers His grace. How can one, whose heart is set on an abundant draught of this Nectar, ever give himself up to harmful intoxicants like wine? One who hearkens to the Guru's instructions and drinks this cup of the Word of God, is at once accepted by Him. How can one whose whole being is hungry for a sight of the Bewitching Lord and a seat at His door, ever hanker after Salvation or Paradise? They have no value or attraction for him. He has no concern with them. They are below his thoughts, One who is ever engrossed in singing the Lord's praises and in calm contemplation of Divine virtues, is ever self-intoxicated and needs not the false, short-lived intoxication to be had from alcoholic or similar other drinks. He is ever attuned to the Lord and thus lives in an unshakable attitude of detachment from the world. He does not gamble away his life in hankering after harmful intoxicants. Listen, O Bharthari Yogi, to the Word of God as sung by Nanak. Such a man drinks the Nectar of Name and lives in divine intoxication every moment of his life. Such a one shouldst thou try to be.'¹

Bharthari was convinced that the *Sahaj Yoga* advocated by the Guru was superior to the *Hath Yoga* followed by the Yogis. He resolved to qualify

1. *Rag Asa*.

himself for entering the path, laid down by the Guru. We shall see later that he was successful at last. But his disciples and associates would not yield so easily. They felt annoyed at finding all the offerings meant for them, and all their devoted worshippers, being diverted to the Guru. So they came in a group to have discussions with him. But they were vanquished. They, too, acknowledged him their master.

Many were the persons who entered the path at the place. A Gurdawara was erected at the spot to commemorate the Guru's visit and to keep up the flow of the Name and the Word of God in that locality.¹

Leaving *Kajli Ban*, the Guru started northwards along the west coast of the Deccan. He visited Nasik, Bombay, Surat, Kathiawar, Junagarh, Dawarka, Somnath, and numerous other places on the way.² In these places he met noted *Pandits*, *Pirs*, Ascetics, and *Yogis* and brought them on to the right path. As these people had ample following in their respective localities, their conversion to the new faith meant the conversion of large numbers. Thereafter, he travelled through Sind and Bahawalpur, and crossing the Satluj, visited Shujaabad, Thence he visited the city called Uch, where he had a religious discussion with *Pir Ahmad Hassan Jalal Din*. The *Pir* acknowledged the Guru as his spiritual guide. All his followers, of course, did the same. In due course the Guru returned to his birth-place in 1515 A.D. After a short stay there, he visited his sister at Sultanpur. Thence he returned to Kartarpur, where he had left his family. He had been on tour for about four years.

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1. In the note of Bhai Paira's observations and experiences made by Bhai Banno under the heading "*Haqiqat Rah-i-Muqam*", it is mentioned that Bhai Paira found a Sikh *Sangat* or centre of Sikhism at *Kajli Ban* in the Deccan. It is also stated that at that place the Guru had held a discussion with the *Siddhas* of the place, vanquished them completely, and established a centre of his faith.
 2. As said already, he established *Manjis* or missionary at all places visited by him. A *dharmshala* marked every such centre. *Dharmshalas* or Sikh temples still exist in several places in the South, e.g. Rameshwar, Salur, Bhaker and Shivkanji in Madras, and at Colombo in Ceylon. Old temples, with Ms copies of the Holy *Granth* in some of them, are still found at Burhanpur, Surat, Bombay (Mahalakshmi, Grant Road), Amraoti, and Nirmal. (Vide Teja Singh Ganda Singh p. 9. f.n.)

CHAPTER 38

TOUR TO THE NORTH : GORAKHMATA

After a short stay of Kartarpur, the indefatigable Guru again started on his third *Udasi* or tour with a view to reforming the world. This was in 1516 A.D. This time he directed his steps to the north. He wore a strange dress, mainly composed of leather and skin, from head to foot. On his forehead he had a saffron *tilak*. With him he had two companions-Hassu, a blacksmith, and Sihan, a calico-printer. Mardana was left behind to sing the Word of God to the disciples at Kartarpur. As usual, he took a circuitous route, visiting villages and important places where people needed his message of work, service, love, prayer, and adoration. On the one hand, he met learned Brahmins, Ascetics, *Yogis*, *Pirs* and *Faqirs*, who, by virtue of their real or feigned learning and supernatural powers, lived lives of slothful ease and, sometimes, even of vicious luxury. In his own sweet way he convinced them of the sinfulness of their baneful parasitic lives, and taught them the right way to attain peity and honour. On the other hand, he met men in secular authority, chiefs and kings, who forgetful of their duties towards God and man and their own higher selves, were entangled in superstition and sensual pleasures, and misused their powers in oppressing and tyrannizing over their subjects. Fearlessly, but sweetly, he convinced them of the wrong which they were committing against their own inner selves by incurring God's displeasure and defeating the purpose of their lives. He awoke in them the spiritual faculty which all have but few use and develop. By the conversion of these holding positions of secular or religious authority, all their followers automatically took to the right path in the course of time.

Traversing the sub-montane tracts of the lower Himalayas, and visiting many places on the way, he reached a place then called Gorakhmata. It was situated about twenty miles from Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh. It was a stronghold of the Yogis. We have seen that it was the Guru's practice to meet reputed men of all creeds and races, and to have discussions with them regarding the true goal or ideal of human life and the mode of life most suited to the

attainment of that ideal. His object in going to Gorakhmata was the same. He wanted to wean the Yogis there from a life of retirement and inactivity, and to lead them to a life of work and devotion, of love and service. There were several of them at Gorakhmata. They questioned him about his faith. His answers surprised them; for they bespoke a far greater communication with the Supreme Lord and a far deeper knowledge of His Ways and Will, than they had acquired even after life-long practice of yoga. They felt that if he could be won over to adopt their sect, it would regain fresh vigour and spread rapidly in the land. So they invited him to be a *Yogi* and to adopt their way of life and dress. The Guru replied that religion did not consist in this or that form of dress, nor in performing this or that ceremony, nor in visiting this or that place of pilgrimage. True religion, said he, should affect the heart and soul and the whole life of man. It should teach him how to live in the world with honour, how to abide pure amid the impurities and allurements of the world, how to make the best use of the human life which, if once thrown away, would not come to him again and again. 'Why throw away this precious life ? Why take it as a curse to be born in gloom and dejection ? It offers splendid opportunities for all-sided self-improvement and for assisting others in their march on the path of peace and happiness. Come out of your retirement, Humanity needs your services, You are the pick of the Hindu society. Why desert it ? Why sit aloof, totally careless of its condition and destiny ? Come, step forth into the arena of life; be heroes and saviours instead of being cowards runaways, and refugees. Therein lies the true essence of true religion. That is the true field and function for a yogi or man of religion.

The *Siddhas* were completely vanquished. They bowed before the Guru. They acknowledged the truth of the Guru's words, but regretted that they could not follow the noble but arduous path prescribed by him. The deep ruts in which their lives had run for decades had become the graves of their higher selves and they were content to lie there and sigh till bodily death would remove them from the world.

He stayed with them for some time, giving them lessons in his religion. The *Siddhas* listened to him with deep respect and prayed him to stay with them for ever. But he declined the invitation. Saying that he had to do his duty towards other people as well.. When he left that place, the *Siddhas* called it Nanakhmata in memory of his visit. The place became a centre of Sikh Mission.

One of the Yogis, named Machhandarnath, felt specially drawn towards the Guru. When the latter left the place, this Yogi accompanied him in order to enjoy, for some time more, the soul stirring Songs and Discourses of the Minstrel of God, as he moved or halted at pleasure. At one of these halts, about twenty miles from Nanakmata, Machhandarnath begged for something to eat and satisfy his hunger. They were then sitting under a soap-nut tree. The Guru pointed to the branch which was just above their heads and asked one of his companions to climb and shake it. As the nuts fell, the Guru bade the yogi eat his fill. The nuts were sweet. Thinking that perhaps the tree was of a special variety, the yogi climbed up another branch and tasted a nut from there. it was bitter as ever.

Up to this day the brench under which the Guru sat bears sweet soap-nuts while the others bear bitter ones. No other soapnut tree anywhere bears sweets nuts.

CHAPTER 39

TOUR TO THE NORTH-II PANDIT BRAHMDAS OF MARTAND

Accompanied by his two disciples, the Guru travelled northwards. In due course he reached Kashmir via Jammu. After visiting Anantnag and the adjoining places, he reached the twin springs of Martand, near Mattan. A lover of Nature that he was, he was greatly drawn by the natural beauty of the place. He took his post at Mattan on a platform in the lower lake of the Springs. Surrounded on all sides by Nature in her exquisite beauty of colour, form, and hue, the Guru let his spirit roam from Nature to her Lord and Maker. It was in such free, un-interrupted communions that he drank at the Supreme source of all life, light, love, and Bliss, and after having had his fill, distributed these divine blessings among the people, too busy in their mundane affairs. He stayed at the springs for about three weeks. Shepherds who grazed their herds in the neighbourhood heard his Divine Songs that went far and away over the wings of the still mountain air, and came to make offerings of milk and to pay homage to one who seemed to be living on air and the Word of God. They got the Word from him and went about singing it in joyful notes as they tended their herds in the rich valleys of Kashmir.

After some time, his presence became known to a learned Brahmin, named Brahmdas. This Brahmin was the most eminent of the *Pandits* of Kashmir. Two camels loaded with books of ancient wisdom were always at his heels. He had studied all these and could lead discussion on every one of them. Round his neck he always carried his stone-god, suspended by a thread. On his forehead he had the sacred *tilak*. Very impressive did he look when marching with all this array and display of piety and learning. He heard that a strange man, 'who wore leather and ate fish', had come and was living near the Springs. He also heard that a shepherd, who had approached that man with the intention of cutting some practical jokes with him, had, at the very sight of him, abandoned all his frivolity and fallen at his feet. The shepherd was said to have been transfigured by the Word of the strange man. After that meeting,

he had always gone about singing strange, charming, soul-stirring Songs. Many others had been likewise transfigured by a touch of the feet of him whom, ever after, they called their Guru or Master. Brahmdas heard all this. Something in him was touched. He wanted to see the Guru, but his pride of learning stood in his way. He did not feel inclined to go and humble himself before a stranger.

He was thus undecided when he met his Muhammadan friend, Kamal. This latter was a true seeker after God. He had searched for Him in the seclusion of forests and hills, away from the haunts of men, but his search had been in vain. He had not been blessed with the Grace of God. His heart was, therefore, hungry as ever. His thirst for the life-giving waters flowing from the feet of the Supreme Lord was unslaked. He pined for a true life of the spirit. The learning of his friend, Brahmdas, had also failed to slake the thirst of his soul.

On that day, as Kamal went to see his friend, the latter told him of the strange man near the Springs and of all that was being said about him. Kamal, whose parched soul had been athirst for the Lord since long, at once sought the presence of Guru Nanak; for Lord since long, at once sought the presence of Guru Nanak; for something within him had whispered to him that the Guru would be able to give him the water of Life, the *Amrit*, for which he had searched so long in vain. A look on that divinely radiant face did for Kamal what years of wanderings in forests, self-tortures, and *samadh*s had failed to do. He bowed at his feet. A thrill of joy passed through him. His sleeping spirit awoke within him into full life. He felt the lighting of a holy flame in his soul. He realized that the Lord, for Whom he had been vainly searching in caves and forests, was in his own heart. The Guru showed him that in the depths on his own heart there burnt and glowed the divine spark which he had so long managed to hide and smother. The divine Guest had been at home when he, the seeker and host, had been abroad, too busy in his vain pursuits to seek and attend to the Great King, Who actually but unknown to him, sat ever ready for him in the innermost shrine of his own soul. By the grace of the Guru, he discerned God shining as a 'triple constellation in the spiritual firmament, as the source of the God, the True, and the Beautiful'. He found the Lord of his quest pervading the world and enthroned in his own breast. All this gave him a joy which he had never known before even in dreams. He became a disciple of the Guru. He followed Guru Nanak in his journey till he was asked to settle in the Kuram valley and preach his Master's message among the tribes all round.

When Brahmdas heard of the transfiguration of his friend, Kamal, he also went to the Guru. But his pride of learning also went with him. It still sat all the door-steps of his heart, bidding away all thoughts of humility which comes from the opening of the soul's eyes. His camel-loads of Sanskrit books of ancient wisdom were yet with him. He wanted to impress the Guru with a show of his learning, before starting discussions in which he felt sure to defeat him. On reaching the place where the Guru sat, Brahmdas saluted him and sat down before him. Noticing the Guru's dress, he said, 'What sort of a *Sadhu* are you ? Why do you wear leather, which is unclean. No religious man will don such dress. Why have you twisted a rope round your body ? Why don't you observe the forms and formalities of your ancient religion ? Why do you eat flesh and fish, which no man of religion should ever do ?'

On hearing these questions, the Guru smilingly told him that piety did not consist in wearing this or that form of dress, or eating this or that kind of food. True piety should dwell in the heart and soul of man. It should mould his character and colour his dealings with his fellow-beings. Only such dress and articles of food should be avoided as produce pain and disease in the body or engender evil thoughts and foul desires in the mind and heart. The observance of needless formalities in dress and food only serves to dwarf and cripple the soul and to crush the divine spark, which burns and glows in the depth of every human heart.' All the knowledge, added the Guru, which the *Pandit* had acquired, had only distracted him all the more. He was as ignorant as ever of the Fount of true Knowledge. He had acquired knowledge for its own sake and had thus succeeded in burdening his soul unnecessarily. True knowledge which could help man in his journey towards God-realization should have its roots in Faith and its topmost branches in Love. He had, however, been hanging in the dry mid-air of dry soul-less knowledge. Faith and love were absent from his barren lore laden-heart, how could there have developed a friendship, a living bond, between the seeker and the Sought, the knower and the Unknown ?

The Guru then sang a hymn in which he stressed the point that all true religions are paths to the abode of the Father of all, and that the true teacher serves as a ladder to enable the seeker to ascend to Him. Here is that hymn :-

'There is but one road, and one door; the Guru is the ladder to reach the true Home of the self or soul.

Nanak, the beautiful Lord resides there, and all bliss is in His Name.
 God, having created Himself, knows Himself.
 He separated the earth from the sky and spread canopy over it.
 He fixed the sky without any pillars through the manifestation of His Will.
 Having created the sun and the moon. He infused His light into them.
 He made night and day; how wonderful are his playful acts !
 Holy places, religion, meditation, and bathing on holy days-
 None of these is equal to Thee, O God; how can I describe Thee ?
 Thou seated on Thy throne, are alone True and Eternal; all others are subject to
 birth and death'

Var Malar.

After a pause, the Guru uttered another hymn in praise of God and the true Teacher, who merged in Him, leads people to His feet. It may be rendered as below :-

'You, O God, are true, the embodiment of Truth, You have manifested Truth.
 You sits absorbed in Yourself, hiding the ultimate Source of all,
 Brahma called himself great, but he found not Your limit.
 You have neither father nor mother; who begot Thee ?
 You have neither form nor feature, nor any caste.
 You feels neither hunger nor thirst; yet you goes about your work ever satiated.
 You are merged in the Guru and reveals your Word through him
 By pleasing the True One, one gets merged in Him.'

Var Malar.

Brahmdas heard all with wrapt attention and was almost convinced of his error. Still his philosophical mind urged him to put a question or two. So he asked, 'How were the things created ? What existed before creation ? Where was God then?'

The Guru replied to him in a Song. It told him that such enquiries were of no use, as they could lead nowhere. The world is in God and God is in the world. the Creator alone can know His own secrets. Man can only hazard guesses. But they are futile. They serve no purpose as far as our search for God is concerned. It is enough for man to know that the whole universe is the creation of a Supreme Being who dwells in its every little part and particle, and is yet aloof from all. But not every little part and particle, and yet aloof from all. But not every man can see or feel Him indwelling in His own creation. We

cannot see God until the image of God, in which we are made, has been converted by a life of service and devotion into a likeness of God stamped on our souls. In order to see Him as He is, we must be like Him. To that end we must pray and act, that is, love and serve our fellow-beings on the one side, and love and adore our Maker, on the other. This Brahmdas had never done. How could he know and see God and fathom His ways ?

Brahmdas fell at the Guru's feet. He threw away the stone-god from his neck, became a worshipper of God in the manner shown to him by the Guru, and performed service for the Guru. But his evil desires and pride of learning were still there, acting as obstacles in the path of his spiritual progress. Whatever service he performed was brief and perfunctory. He did not find any joy or elation in it. His heart was ever else where. Then he had his doubts. He began to say to himself, 'I have been doing this sort of service in the past, too; but I am still where I was; there had been no change for the better, no progress towards the goal.

One day he explained his doubts and difficulty to the Guru and prayed for his advice. The Guru knew what was passing in the *Pandit's* mind and hampering his progress. So he said, 'You should go and meet your guru. The lesson that you learn from that guru will help you to overcome all your doubts and difficulties' 'What guru shall I take ?' said Brahmdas. 'Where shall I find him ?' The Guru said, 'In that wilderness there is a house where you will find four *faqirs*. They will tell you where to find your guru.' The *Pandit* went to them. After a little pause, they pointed out a temple to him and said, 'You will find your guru in that temple. Go there.' The *Pandit* did as bidden. He found there a beautiful woman dressed in red. Taking her to be his guru, he bowed to her. She took off her shoe and struck it forcefully on his head. Crying bitterly, he went back to the four *faqirs* who had directed him to that temple. When he told them of his experience, one of them said, 'Brahmdas, that was your guru. Did you not recognise your guru?' Brahmdas said, 'No, she was a vile woman.' 'No', said the *faqir*, 'she was *Maya* whose disciple you are, for whom you have been yearning and toiling so far, and whom you hold dearer than everything else. You feel proud of whatever service you do to others. You cherish a desire to be praised and considered great for all that you do for others. You are thereby acting as a disciple of *maya*.'

Brahmdas was convinced of his error. He returned to the Guru, fell at his feet, and prayed for his blessings. The Guru placed his hand on the *Pandit's*

head. A joy and peace unknown before descended on Brahmdas. He rose at the Guru's bidding, a changed man. He cast away his two loads of books and, with them, his pride and desire for fame. The Guru bestowed on him the priceless gift of the Name. He became a devout disciple of the Guru and began to repeat God's Name every moment of his life.

The hymns which the Guru composed in order to answer Brahmdas's questions and to give him spiritual insight were committed to writing by Hassu and Sihan.

When the Guru left that place, he entrusted Brahmdas with the duty of bringing others to the Path which the Guru had shown to him. Right earnestly did Brahmdas did his duty of sharing with others the Love, Light, Life, and Joy which the Guru had infused in him, and of lighting in the souls of others the holy flame, which Guru Nanak had lighted in his.

TOUR TO THE NORTH-III AT THE MANSAROWAR LAKE

Leaving Brahmdas, the Guru made a tour of Kashmir, staying about two weeks at Sirinagar. Thence, passing again through Mattan, he penetrated further north. Scaling several lofty mountains, he reached Mount Sumer or Kailash and the Mansarowar Lake. There he met several renowned *Siddhas*. One of them, Bharthari, had already met him in the jungles of the Deccan, and had acknowledged his greatness. The arrival of the Guru made a stir among the *Siddhas*. They lived in those cold regions lives of sloth and luxury, drinking wine and eating all that they could get or exact from the people living in those parts. Those people had to meet their exactions because the *Siddhas* used to terrify them with shows of their occult powers. The *Siddhas* regarded the Guru as a possible disturber of their pleasant life.

Another thought also puzzled them. The Mansarowar Lake was inaccessible to ordinary men of the plains. The *Siddhas* could go there because they had, by various practices of 'yoga', acquired uncommon powers of endurance. They also possessed powers which, in their opinion, could be acquired only by the practice of *yoga*. The Guru's and his disciples' bodies glowing with health and vigour seemed to be unaccustomed to severe penances. How had the three managed to scale such difficult heights and overcome all the obstacles of the journey to the Mansarowar ?

So the first question which they put to the Guru was, 'What power has brought you here over such difficult heights ?' The Guru replied. 'I contemplated on the Lord of the universe and, in love and devotion, concentrated my mind on Him. That has brought me here.'

'What is your name and what your creed?'

'Nanak is my name.' replied the Guru. 'I have obtained the object of my desire by meditation on the Divine Lord. By regarding myself as a humble

1. The discussion which the Guru had with the *Siddhas* is given by Bhai Gurdas in his *Vars*. The account given above is a rather free rendering of the stanzas 28-31 of *Var.I*.

servant and seeker of God, I have raised myself to His feet. My creed is that of love for God and His creation.'

'How fares it with the world of mortals below?' enquired the *Siddhas*

The question gave the Guru an opportunity to give to them a piece of his mind regarding their mode of life and their neglect of duty towards mankind. So he replied, 'Well friends, hard, very hard indeed, does it go with the world below. Sin and falsehood, tyranny and oppression, lust and greed, wars and pestilence, prevail everywhere and disfigure the land. The world is engulfed in darkness, deep and thick. It is as impossible to discover Truth and Righteousness there in these days, as it is to see the bright moon on the moonless night. India has lost this moon of Truth and Righteousness. I have girded up my loins in search of this lost treasure. But vain, yes utterly vain, appears to be my search. You ask, "What is the state of things in the world of mortals?" Have you a thought to spare for your unfortunate motherland? I may tell you that she is in the grip of sin, evil, and darkest woes, and is crying aloud in agony, But in this doleful song that rises from the breast of an afflicted humanity, you discover a music which lulls you to slumber. There is none in the land who could remedy this sorry state of things. How could it be otherwise? Those who could have done so have fled from their duties. Persons like you, who are the cream of the Hindu society, have concealed themselves in the fastness of the lofty mountains. You have deserted the poor people to their miserable lot, you, who ought to have been their leaders in this age of sin, slavery, and darkness, propt on your beds of ferns and flowers beside this lake of nectar in the mountains, you take the inebriating cup and live and lie reclined together like gods, careless of mankind. Yet you would enquire from me, "How fares it with the world of mortals below?" To speak the truth, you add to the misery of the afflicted people on whom you live as parasites. I wonder what good you see in this life of sloth and drunkenness. You neglect your duty towards man, God, and your own higher selves. True religion should teach you to work, pray, and adore; it should teach you to be true sons of your motherland. Devoid of true worship, which consists in honouring and loving the Father, negligent of your duty to your neighbours, which consists in lovingly helping them onward in the path of progress towards the Blissful Home of the Father, and unmindful of your duty to your own selves, which consists in a healthy, all-round, development and right use of the body, mind and spirit, you rub ashes on your bodies and sit here lost in vain, drunken

contemplation. You have ceased to be men of religion; for religion does not consist in trying to save one's own self by virtue of creed and seclusion, but in trying to save others by virtue of life, lived in the world. Why should you enquire about the world? You are as good as dead so far as the poor, suffering, ignorant sin-ridden, down-trodden humanity is concerned. You can make a far better use of your life and help the world better by living in it, and by entering into social relationships. Instead of wearing empty forms and doing hard penances, you should exert yourselves in the service of mankind. Your love of miracles leads you astray; it has no connection with religion. Give it up. Meditate on God, serve mankind by engaging in useful, humanitarian activities, and lead the people to a better, cleaner, and nobler life. Don't think of your own salvation alone. Help others on that path, my friends.'

'But', said the *Siddhas*, 'not all of our great Order have thus retired from the world. Several of our people go about from house to house. Surely, they must be doing their duty, and ministering to the mental and spiritual needs of the people'

'No, friends,' replied the Guru. 'Your *Yogis* have fallen likewise. They lack both virtue and knowledge. With them yoga consists in rubbing ashes on their bodies, morning and evening, and begging for food from door to door. There is none among them competent to show the right path to the deluded, degraded, and trodden people. Men of religion, who, in the past, used to guide and reform the populace, have themselves taken to evil ways. They have reduced religion to a mockery. They go about begging and exacting food, filling their bellies, and gathering provision for their large families. The condition of the people is wretched, indeed. All distinctions of right and wrong, and of good and evil, have disappeared from among them. They have become brutalized and behave like wild beasts, snatching others' rights and substance without the least compunction. Social ties have all become loose. Conjugal relations are now an affair of lust and lucre. Sanctity of marriage is no longer respected. Men and women meet and part at will. Sin prevails and round in the land, Kings, whose duty it is to make and enforce good laws, to keep peace in the land, and safeguard their subjects' life, honour, and property, have themselves become the greatest criminals. The fence, so to say, is eating up the crop; the shepherds are destroying the sheep. The rulers are oppressing and misusing the people in countless ways. The Qazis and other officials are corrupt. They take bribes and deprive people of their rights. Trod-

den under this manifold tyranny and slavery, devoid of true education and training, and bereft of leaders and teachers like you, who could have enlightened and organized them, the people have become debased and demoralized. They have lost their souls. They have become weak in body, mind, and spirit. They have no faith in themselves and no self-respect. Under manifold oppression they have ceased to have any regard for truth. No organization to withstand the evils of tyranny, oppression, and misrule is possible under such conditions. How is the world to be saved ? Who is to save it ?

The *Siddhas* were greatly impressed with what the Guru said. They felt the justice of his rebuke, but they had not the strength of heart to give up their life of intoxication and passive contemplation, and to return to the turmoil of the world. 'How good would it be,' thought they, 'if this great youth, who knows the world so well and feels for it so deeply, and who possesses such spiritual powers were to be converted to our Order. He could then go back into the world below and put fresh life into our declining sect.' So, they tried to allure him with shows of miracles and riches. They requested him to fetch a jug of water from the lake. The Guru found that the whole bank and surface of the lake were covered with various kinds of precious stones. But he paid no heed to them. He returned and told them that there was no water there. Finding him impregnable that way, they tried to defeat him in religious discussion. They failed there too. The Divine Songs which the Guru sang in reply to their questions are given in *Guru Granth Sahib*. In these he told them of the path that he had come to show to the people. The gist of one of them is given in brief here below :-

'In, behind, and beyond this visible world, there dwells the Supreme Power which sustains the whole show by means of eternal laws. Religion which sustains the whole show by means of eternal laws. Religion awakens in the soul of man a thirst for an attunement and union with his Supreme Power, and prescribes the ways and means for the satisfaction of this thirst of the human soul. In order to achieve a union with Him, a man should seek and associate with men of God, and there sing of His lofty, divine qualities. By his so doing, there arise in his heart a love and respect for those qualities. In consequence, he tries to acquire them. He sheds all evil that pollutes his heart and mind. He becomes like Him whose praises he rejoices to sing. He goes about his daily duties with God enthroned in his heart. He speaks only as

much as is absolutely necessary for the discharge of his duties. Otherwise, he keeps busy in thinking God and his attributes, and in making efforts of realize those virtues in his daily life. In this way he is daily and hourly ennobled. Thus, by remaining in the world, yet resolutely refusing to concede a jot to it, he acquires by any other means. The Name of the Lord and His divine attributes become indelibly engraved on his heart. His thoughts, feelings, and efforts are all in perfect harmony with the Divine Will. He does as the Lords bide him do; for he had become one with Him. When he reaches such a stage, he becomes like Him in every respect. He acquires the power to move mountains. God fulfils his slightest wish. But such a servant of the Lord ceases to have any such wish or will as in not his Lord's wish and Will. He turns not his thoughts after occult powers, as he has no desire to pose as a great man in the eyes of the world. He succeeds in eliminating all thoughts of his own self from the sphere of his activity. To ensure this further, he engages himself in the service of others. This breeds humility. He works hard to bring, guide, and help others in the way to godliness and eternal bliss. He is thus doubly blessed. The internal joy born of this selfless disinterested service of others elevates his soul and spurs him to still greater efforts that way. Thus he lives in Him and He lives in him. His life is a pilgrimage, leading him, through love, service, and devotion, to the throne of the Creator and Sustainer of the world. When he dies, he does so cheerfully; for he goes to Him, eager to carry out His behests whenever and wherever He might choose to send him forth again.'

Rag Asa.

All that the Guru said silenced the *Siddhas*. Their pride was humbled. They acknowledged the truth of his words but were not willing to put those words into practice. They would not give up their lives of inebriate sloth and musings. Only one of them, Bharthari Yogi, who had once already met the Guru in the jungles of the Deccan, became a disciple of the Guru. It is recorded that, after a time, this *Yogi* left the company of the *Siddhas* and settled at Kartarpur.

This defeat of the *Siddhas* at the Guru's hands, followed by another at Achal Batala, completely broke the spell of their power over the people of the locality. In token of their gratitude for this relief from the exactions of the *Siddhas*, the people of that mountainous tract began to respect and adore the Guru. He is held still in great esteem there as is testified by persons who have recently visited those parts. In the four cave-temples which stand round the

Mansarowar Lake, images of Guru Nanak are worshipped by those people along with other images. These temples are object of pilgrimage for monks from Tibbet and *Sadhus* from India.

The talks which the Guru had with the *Siddhas* here , and later on at Achal Batala, were afterwards versified by him in his *Siddhas Gosh*.

From Mansarowar the Guru turned backwards and passing through Nepal, Sikkam, Bhutan, and Tibbet, he entered China. He went as far at least as Nanking and established a *dharamsala* there. Since then several Chinese have been worshipping him. Several Chinese pilgrims are often even now seen at Amritsar worshipping at the 'Wahiguru's Temple as they call the Golden Temple.

From China the Guru returned to Tibbet and went as far as Lhasa. From there he returned to Kashmir over the mountains and entered the plains via Srinagar, and Sialkot.

CHAPTER 41

TOUR TO THE WEST-I : VISIT TO MECCA

The call of humanity and God which Guru Nanak had heard in his youth at Sultanpur was yet ringing in his ears. He had been to the east as far as Burma, to the South as far as Ceylon, and to the North as far as Tibet and China. In all these places he had visited the strongholds of Hindu and Muhammadan religion, had met the learned men of all sects, and had shown to them how they were not what they professed to be. To every one whom he met on his travels he brought home the lesson that it was not creed, not lip-profession, not even a belief in this or that saviour, that could help man in this journey through this life or the one to come; it was right thought, right feeling, and right act and effort, that could help man in his career. Creeds were things of this world. They helped only to divide man against man. It was character that accompanied man in his journey beyond the grave. So, wherever he went, he reformed men's character. The burden of his teaching was, 'Truth is greater than everything else, but higher still is true living.'¹ It was true life that he taught people to live, a life in which the spirit was in constant accord with and subservient to the spirit, and the human body was at the command and within the control of the ever-poised mind and soul.

Pirs, Faqirs, Mullas, Pandits, Yogis, and scholars had met him and tried to defeat him in argument. The Guru had touched some inner chords in their hearts and made them see the divine spark which glows and burns in the depths of every human heart, but which get clouded and shrouded in deep thick layers of worldly delusion. In all places he had enjoined upon his disciples to carry to others the message of life, love, light, and joy which he had imparted to them. In this way, the purifying, uplifting and unifying movement which he had started was carried on after him in all places that he visited.

He had made extensive tours and had conveyed his message to numberless persons. But he had not had his fill to these travels yet. Hence, after a

1. *Sri Rag, Ashtpadi.*

short stay at Kartarpur, he started again on his fourth tour. This was to be to the west. It began in 1518 A.D. Bhai Mardana was with him. He put on the blue dress worn by *Hajjis* or Muhammadan pilgrims to Mecca, took a *Faqir's* staff in his hand, and a collection of his hymns under his arm. To complete the guise, he also carried with him a jug (*lota*) for his ablutions and a carpet whereon to say his prayers. Thus dressed, he appeared to be a typical *Hajji*.

In those days Surat was the port for ships for Mecca. The Guru started in the direction. He travelled by short stages as was his wont; for his was a tour for the purpose of sowing the seed of Name in the hearts of mankind. He wanted to make people spiritually alive. His presence was needed everywhere. Like a blessing cloud in the rainy season, he went about irrigating with life-giving waters of Truth, faith, knowledge, and love the barren tracts of humanity which came within his way. On the way, wherever he met children, he would join them in their sports and jovialities. In due course, passing through Sind, he reached Surat, either direct on foot or in ship via Karachi. Taking ship from there, he reached the Arabian coast. Thence he marched towards Mecca where he reached in due course.

Reaching there, the Guru lay down to rest. In sore need of rest was he after that dusty tramp through the desert of Arabia. But even then the thought of his mission was uppermost in him. He would not waste a night. He knew how to attract the people's attention. We saw him at Hardwar throwing water to the west, when superstitious Hindus were throwing it to the east; we know how at Kurkshetra he began to cook meat during a solar eclipse and thus horrified the people; and how he sat aloof when the *Arti* was being performed in the temple of Jagannath. In all these places his conduct had scandalized the people, as being directly opposed to their beliefs and practices. They would swarm around him, howling with wrath and shouting all sorts of question. And that was what he wanted. Thus, even in crowded places, he had managed to get a hearing. Something equally horrifying to the 'Faithful' was done by him at Mecca. He knew quite well the deep and superstitious regard of the Muhammadans for the shrine at Macca. He knew that no Mahammadan would lie down with his feet in the direction of the *Ka'aba* or tolerate any one else's doing so. He was quite well aware of the hard-hearted bigotry and intolerance of the contemporary Muhammadans in general, and the *Qazis* and *Mullas* in particular. He was conscious of the danger a man would run by injuring, in any way, the religious susceptibilities of Mahammadans in their holy of holies. Yet

the work ordained by the Lord had to be done. No thought of personal risk could deter him from the execution of his duty to God and man. Besides, he had full faith in his Master and an unshakable confidence in himself. He lived in God; God lived in him; how and whom could he fear ?

So, afraid of naught, and eager to make people taste the life of the spirit which he had come so far to bestow on them, he did what no ordinary man could ever do. He lay down to rest with his feet towards the *Ka'aba*. As expected and desired by him, a loud uproar rose at once among the pilgrims and the custodians of the sacred place. They swore at him. They threatened him. One of them, named Jiwan, who, having come from India, was more fanatic and rash than the rest, kicked him and said, 'Who art thou, O infidel, that thou sleepest with thy feet towards the House of God?' In a calm, sweet voice, in which there was neither anger nor perturbation, the Guru replied, 'Brother, be not so hasty and rash. I am tired and in sore need of rest. You may turn may feet in another direction where God is not'. Thereupon Jiwan, in great anger, seized the Guru's feet. The touch sent a mild shiver through his body; but he was not in a mood to pay heed to such an experience, novel though it was. He dragged the Guru's feet in the opposite direction. He lifted his eyes and lo, the wonder of wonders ! The *Ka'aba* was seen to be standing in the direction in which the Guru's feet had been turned. He took up the feet again and pulled them to another direction. The *Ka'aba* was seen to follow. Round and round were the feet dragged, and round and round whirled the *Ka'aba*. 'Don't you see,' said the Guru to Jiwan, 'that God dwells in all directions ? Indeed. He is the Life of all life and the Light of all-light. It is in Him that the whole creation lives, moves, and has its being. Open your heart to Him, man. Moreover, don't forget the behests of your Prophet; for he says in the *Quran*, "Allah's is the east and the west. To withersover you turn, there is the face of Allah." What you have seen now is but a demonstration of the truth of these words. Be true to your faith.'

The *Hajjis* (Pilgrims) saw this strange sight and heard these words with wide, open mouths. They realized the truth of what the Guru had said. Their hearts and minds were filled with inexpressible awe and wonder. They quietly and meekly left the Guru to take his rest as he pleased.

By morning, he became the talk of the whole city. *Qazis*, *Mullas*, *Pirs*, and *Faqirs*, of different lands, who were there on pilgrimage, crowded around him. Among them there were some from India. too, Makhdum Rukan-ud-Din

of Uch, *Pir* Baha-ud-Din, Jati Lal, Sheikh Brahm, Kamal Din, and Jalal Din, were the chief among them, They wanted to have a religious discussion with him. They had come to know that he hailed from India. Hence Rukan-ud-Din was chosen to lead the discussion. 'Art thou a Hindu or a Muhammadan?' was the first question.

'Neither', replied the Guru. 'I am but a servant of God and lover of mankind.'

'But who is better and holier in your opinion, a Hindu or a Muhammadan ?'

'Neither in himself,' replied the Guru, 'on the mere score of belonging to this or that religious community. It is not creed but life that can ennoble or degrade one. Man's advancement here and hereafter depends on the sum-total of the good that he does to his fellowmen, the amount of love and amity that he sows in the world, and the extent to which he can keep his soul pure and free among the allurements and attachments of this life. Acts, and not lip-professions, count in the spirit's progress to its goal. Creeds are but like fast-fading dyes. They affect not the inner self of man. They dye not the soul in the fast and shining hues of divine love. From what I have seen of Hindus and Muhammadans, I would make bold to say that neither of the two sects deserves to approach or be received in the court of God. There is no love lost between them. They revile and abuse each other. In their hearts there is no room for God, who is all Love. Ram, the God of the Hindus, and Rahim or *Allah*, the God of the Muhammadans, appear to be two irreconcilable foes. To me, it seems that neither of these sects worships God, the loving Father of all. Neither, they both worship the Devil, the spirit of evil and strife.'

Long and serious was the discussion. All *Qazis*, *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, and *Mullas* exercised their wits to defeat the Guru, but he was in constant communion with the Supreme source of all Wisdom and Knowledge. His heart and soul were ever open to the Divine inflow which went gushing through his very pores. Who could defeat him ? Soon, all his interrogators were forced to acknowledge his greatness. They bowed before him and sought his instruction. Makhdum Rukan-ud-Din of Uch became the devoutest of his new disciples. In a short time the whole city resounded with the Guru's praises. His sweet divine Songs were on everybody's lips. The '*Hindi Pir*' had conquered all of them by his sweet humility and all-embracing love.

After some time the Guru made ready to go. His new disciples-*Qazis*, *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, *Mullas*, and laymen-all begged him to stay longer. But he had yet to carry his message to others in other lands. Their need was urging and drawing him on. So they had to resign to his pleasure. Makhdum Rukan-ud-Din at last begged for a souvenir. The Guru gave him his sandals.¹ These were kept respectfully in the *Ka'aba* for some time, but were, on his return to India, brought by Makhdum Rukan-ud-Din to Uch. They are preserved as a sacred relic in the shrine of Uch in the Bahawalpur State in Pakistan and are shown to the faithful on special occasions."

From Mecca the Guru moved on the Madina. There too, the learned men of the place held a discussion with him. They, too, had to bow to him. All who heard the Guru's divine Songs and soul-inspiring discourses became his disciples. From there he travelled northwards and visited Egypt and other adjoining provinces of Africa. Bhai Gain Singh states in his *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa* that, during the Sudan expedition of 1885-86 against the Mahdi, some Sikh soldiers saw, outside the southern gate of Kaikai, the platform where the Guru was said to have sat and discoursed with the king of the place. This platform is known there as that of Nanak *Wali*. Returning from Africa, the Guru went still further northwards as far as Turkey in Europe.² About the tour to these places, however, there are no available records.

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1. The *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas contain the earliest authentic record about this visit. The account given above is based generally on the said *Vars*.
 2. Cf. S.M. Latif's *History of the Punjab*, page 245, where it is stated, 'it appears that he visited Stamboul, a story being related of (Guru) Nanak's visit to Istamboul, and his interview with the Sultan of Turkey, who was noted for his cupidity and his extreme oppression of his subjects (Gur) Nanak's admonition had a great effect on the *Sultan*, who is said to have bestowed his hoarded treasures on the *faqirs* and the needy, and, to have discontinued his tyranny over his people'.

TOUR THE WEST-II : VISIT TO BAGHDAD-I

Retracing his steps southwards, he reached Baghdad in due course. A record of what happened there has come down to us in the works of the Sikh savant, Bhai Gurdas, as well as in those of other and later writers.

It should be remembered that Baghdad was another powerful centre of Islam, where the mere presence of a 'Hindu' was regarded by the 'Faithful' as a stigma on their religious zeal. This will help us to have an idea of the supreme courage of the Master, who could not only fearlessly go among the most powerful bigots, but also ridicule their conception of religion in the strongest of their strongholds, religious and secular. We have seen how he had, at considerable personal risk, brought home to the people of Mecca that their superstitious reverence for the sacred shrine was wrong, that God dwells in no particular direction or place but pervades everywhere. At Baghdad, too, he did something equally significant and heroic.

A little outside the city, he noticed a graveyard with some well-kept tombs. He selected this spot for his stay. Early next morning, a watch before day-break, he bade Bhai Mardana play the rebeck. For a time he himself sat quietly, enjoying the rich strains of music produced by his companion. Then he lifted his loud, melodious voice into a heavenly hymn of divine adoration. All Nature was hushed as if listening reverentially to the praises of her Lord. The melody travelled far on the wings of the still morning air. In that centre of Islam music had never been heard before. It was a thing forbidden by the holy law. All who heard it were astonished. Who could it be that had the courage to break the law of Islam in Baghdad ? The music continued till day-break. Some passers-by felt themselves irresistibly drawn to the place; for music appeals to every living heart. Even poisonous snakes forget to use their fangs when under the spell of music. The few Baghdadis who, in the sacred hours of early dawn, happened to hear the divine Song at close quarters, found that it had struck and set vibrating some invisible chords in the innermost depths of their hearts. They forgot their mundane affairs, they forgot their music-banning

law of Islam, they forgot their own acquired aversion to music. They sat spell-bound, listening in mute adoration.

After a time, the Song ceased. They looked up at the divine singer. There was a glory in his countenance a halo round his person. Its radiance dazzled their eyes. Strange, subtle, and strong vibrations emanating from him captivated them. They bowed to him, stranger though he was.

The Guru then stood up erect. Placing a finger in each of his ears, as the Muhammadans do when about to shout the *Azan* or the call to prayer, he lifted his sweet, melodious voice and shouted as a *Mulla* would do. But his *Azan* was different from that of the Muslims. It contained the Arabic words about God and His greatness, but not the words declaring Muhammad to be His Prophet. The Guru also added some musical, rhyming words in Panjabi in praise of God. Here was another offence against the religion of the Prophet in that stronghold of Islam.

This novel sort of *Azan*, shouted in the stillness of the morning, was heard far and wide. The voice was strange and unknown. The *Azan* was uncommon and perplexing. Not only it did not contain the name of Muhammad, but at its end there were some strange words which had been never coupled with the holy text. As long as the strange divine singer continued his *Azan*, the people kept listening in mute astonishment. When he finished it, a huge uproar rose in the city. Who is he that breaks the holy law of Islam? He has been singing near the holy tombs of *greatfaqirs* and has now distorted the *Azan*. A *greatKafir* (Infidel) must he be, severely must he be punished for this double offence.'

The few who had stood to hear his song now returned to the city. They informed their already scandalized co-religionists that the stranger, who sat in the graveyard, had repeated to them a composition of his in his own tongue and had then explained it to them in their language. Therein he had said that there were millions over millions of nether and upper regions, nay, they were so beyond reckoning that men got tired in their attempts to count them. That was another, still greater, offence against the holy law. The very authority and truth of the prophet and the Holy Book had been questioned; for, in the *Quran*, it was definitely said that there were only seven nether regions and only as many upper ones.

Thus the Guru had broken the Law thrice. When these blasphemies were reported to the religious head of the place, he despatched some of his

men to summon the Guru into his presence. On hearing the summons, the Guru smiled and said, 'Go friends, and tell your master that persons who have given themselves up to God and entered His service, will never heed such imperious commands of any man, however high and formidable he may be. The Great Master, under Whose orders I, a servant of His, have come so far, permits me no leisure to indulge the fanciful whims of the world's potentates. Tell the *Pir* that the Minstrel of God has come to sing to him of the Lord. Let him come and listen to the Word of God. It does not become him to thus exhibit his authority in dealing with a servant of the King of kings.'

The *Pir's* men returned and repeated to him what the Guru had said. Pride of Power had rendered the *Pir* impervious to softer, nobler feelings. He felt enraged at what he thought was an insult offered to him in his own capital by a wandering '*Kafir*'. The Guru had not only broken the Holy Law thrice that day, but had also disobeyed the summons of the highest Islamic authority of Baghdad. Surely he deserved no pity. The *Pir* pronounced the *Fatwa* that in the law of Islam the punishment for such an offender was that he should be stoned to death by the faithful. He exhorted the people to do their duty.

At his bidding a large crowd took stones in their hands and marched towards the place where the Guru and Mardana were sitting in the lap of their Maker. The violent, threatening aspect of the crowd at first perturbed Bhai Mardana. But the Guru bade him be of good cheer and watch the ways of the Lord. What fear need they feel who had handed themselves over to the Will of the fearless and Fear-dispelling Lord ?

When the Crowd drew near, the Guru lifted his sweet, charming voice and began to sing of the Lord. The angry, yelling crowd came near. As they heard the Word of God, their hearts began to flutter. Soon, the arms that had been lifted to strike him, became stiff and stationary where they were. All who had come, yelling with rage and fury, to assault the Guru, stood dumb as cattle, listening spell-bound to his Songs of the Lord. Mute and calm, they stood as if transfixed to the ground. Gradually the storm in their hearts subsided. They felt drawn towards the Minstrel of God.

The *Pir* was sitting at home, musing on the courage of the stranger who could brave the *Pir* of Baghdad in his own capital. None had dared do that before. 'I should like to see this brave stranger; but people will say that in going to see a *Kafir* who has not only blasphemed our religion thrice, but has also disobeyed my summons. I have lowered the dignity of Islam. I feel a

strange urge within me to go to him. But perhaps he has been stoned to death by now. Perhaps I should try to save him'

He was in such thoughts when some-one came to inform him of what had happened to those who had gone to stone the Guru. This news put an end to his hesitation. He got up and started towards the Guru. His young son accompanied him. As they approached the graveyard, they heard the charming, musical voice Songs in the language of the Baghddadis. Soon the father and the son reached the place where, on the bare earth, sat the great Minstrel of God with his rebeck-player. There was a smile of Love on the Guru's lips. His eyes, which were now directed towards the *Pir*, seemed to be shedding showers of blissful calm on all those on whom they fell. The smile of love on the Guru's lips and the look of divine grace in the Guru's eyes, captivated the *Pir's* heart. Then did he understand drawn by what force he had, in utter disregard of the dignity of Islam and his own 'high' office, come to have a look at the brave stranger. He bowed to the Guru and sat before him on the bare, sandy earth.

The people, who had long before thrown away their stones, now drew closer around the Guru to hear what might pass between him and their *Pir*. They were in a chastened mood. After a few words of greetings, the *Pir* remembered the offences against Islam which had been alleged against the Guru. He resolved to discuss the points involved.

He asked the Guru why he loved singing. 'Music', said he, 'excites the passions. It is the sensualists' means of amusement and exhilaration. Religious people do not need such excitement of the mind and heart. They want inward poise and calm. They should shun music. Hence, it is forbidden in our religion.'

The Guru replied, 'You have misunderstood the functions of music. Music is a potent factor for good as for evil. It has a strange, subtle, powerful influence over the human heart and mind. Music melts the heart and makes it pliable. It helps to collect the soul and raise it to white heat where lasting impressions can be stamped on it. It charms the mind, lulls the beating, restless heart, and tames the fractious beast in man. How can music be against any religion? It is surely not forbidden by the Great Artist who designed and made this universe. It is but the outward expression of the tune, pitch, and harmony which are found in the world of Nature, and trees in the forests, gushing brooks and running bees and insects, and the spheres themselves

are taking their characteristic part in the Divine Orchestra of Nature. Love of music is ingrained in the human heart. No amount of prohibitive order can inhibit its display and exercise. Whenever a man is happy and alone-as a cow boy in the meadows, a farmer at the plough, a Caravan-man on his camel-, he hums to himself a tune. Hence, seeing all this, and recognizing the endless possibilities of music for good or evil, is it not wise to elevate the human instinct for music and to enlist it as a powerful helper in our efforts to fit men for the struggle against the ills and evils of life ? Hence, it is, that I sing, and teach others to sing, divine Songs, inculcating lofty ideals of life and worship, and praising the Supreme Lord. This *Kirtan*, or divine music, attunes the soul of man to the Supreme Spirit in which we live, move, and have our being, and enables it to take deep draughts at the Fountain-head of all life, light, love and joy. The baser proclivities of human nature are chastened and re-directed into higher moral channels. Thus purified and exalted, a man becomes a superman, one who lives in the Lord and in whom lives the Lord Himself. It is for this reason that with me music is a hand maid of religion. Moreover, you Prophet, too, was not averse to music; for it is recorded that he took his wife to a music hall. I wonder how you can to believe that music was against religion.'

The *Pir* was greatly impressed with what the Guru had said. But then he questioned the Guru about the second offence against Islam which had been alleged against him. 'I can't imagine', said he, 'that a devout man of religion like you should be inclined towards *Kafar* and believe not in the last of the Prophets. How is it that you did not name him in your cell to prayer ?'

'For the simple reason', said the Guru, 'that I am a worshipper of the Lord alone, who hath none like Him. I prove myself to be nearer the heart of the exclusive monotheism of Islam than the accredited followers of the Prophet. I wonder how you reconcile your uncompromising monotheism with your joining the name of your Prophet with that of the Lord. You condemn the Hindus as infidels because they join other deities with God. Why, you do the same, only in a lesser degree ! Moreover, if you really believe in One God as the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe, if your faith bade you regard Him as present everywhere, how could you hate, oppress, and kill those who differed with you ? If you regarded them as brothers born of the same father as yourself, but believed them to have gone astray, your love for God, who is

your and their common Father, should have filled your hearts with pity, charity, and a fervent zeal to help and serve. Has it been the case with you ? Is it not more correct to say that you believe not in One God but in one Prophet ? You should remember that revelation is the monopoly of no man, nation, or age. You seem to believe that whatever your Prophet has proclaimed is the Truth-the absolute Truth. So you quarrel with those who differ with you in this. In consequence, you boast of loving and serving God, when, actually, you are only hating and oppressing your fellows, Is it as it should be ?

The *Pir* bowed his head and said. 'Truely hast thou spoken, O great *Pir* of Hindustan. Our Belief and practice have greatly fallen. The word of the Prophet has been widely misunderstood and misapplied. Fanatics and zealots have laid special stress on certain texts of the Holy Book which they have interpreted in their own way, and have ignored other texts and other interpretations. This is highly regrettable, and I join with you in condemning all excesses which have been committed against humanity in the name of Islam. But I do not see how you can find it in you to contradict the word of the Prophet and declare that there are millions and millions of nether and upper regions'.

'To that charge,' said the Guru, 'I plead guilty. I assure you, however, that in making the statement in question I spoke nothing but the truth. If you could purify your heart and fill it with love, and attune your soul to the Supreme Spirit that pervades and transcends the universe, you would surely come to realize the truth of what I said about the limitless number of worlds and systems.'

The youthful son of the *Pir*, who had heard all this discussion with rapt attention, now said, 'But can't you, O True *Faqir* of *Allah*, let another have a glimpse of the millions over millions of the regions ? I am sure you can do so by the strength of your spiritual faculty. I fain would have such a glimpse, if you please.'

All right,' said the Guru, 'give me your hand. Now shut your eyes and think of God.'

The youth felt himself to be flying up with the Guru at a tremendous speed. Up and up they went until he lost all sense of direction or time. In the limitless space which was all round them he saw millions over millions of orbs and systems of heavenly bodies. Soon, the youth's eyes got dazzled by having too long gazed at the bright stars of the upper and the nether regions. He

felt as if he had been for years on the wing. So he begged the Guru to take him back to his father. He had seen enough to convince him of what the Guru had said about the number of the regions. They turned downwards. A little after, the young *Pir* opened his eyes and found himself seated beside his father in the graveyard at Baghdad. He narrated his experiences to his wondering father and gave him the sweet food which he had brought from one of the regions visited by him in the company of the Guru.¹ When the son said that he had been flying for what seemed to be years, the father replied, 'No, you have been asleep for a few minutes only, and seem to have been here all the time. But this sweet food tells a different tale. There is also a change in your looks; a change which tells me that you believe what you say. I wish I could have such an experience.'

The Guru assured him that the knowledge divine was within his reach. He had only to cultivate faith seasoned with reason. If he could purify his mind and heart, and let his spirit fly to the feet of the Lord, he would feel the truth of all that the Guru had said. The Guru was thus able to decipher the *Pir* to himself, and awaken in him that spiritual faculty which all have but few use. The *Pir* was won. He fell at the Guru's feet and was blessed. He felt the lighting of a holy flame in his innermost being. All the people of Baghdad, who had attentively listened to everything that had passed between the Guru and the *Pir*, also fell at the Guru's feet. He blessed them all with the Name and made them spiritually alive.

1. Vide *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas. To those who may be inclined to smile at the height of what they may term. blind faith exhibited in the above given description of the young *Pir*'s experiences, is recommended a study of appendix B, to be followed up with further reading in the direction suggested there.

TOUR TO THE WEST-II : VISIT TO BAGHDAD-II

Thus was conquered that stronghold of Islam. On the spot where the Guru sat and discoursed with the *Pir* and his people, was erected, by one of the several faithful Baghdadi followers of the Guru, a platform which was enclosed in spacious building. The building with the platform exists up to this day and was seen by the Sikh soldiers who visited the city during the First Great War. It is situated about a mile to the west of the city with the old graveyard on its north and the Baghdad-Samara Railway line on its south. It has two rooms on the corner of the other room is the platform which is associated with the Guru's name. In the northern wall, beside this platform, is found the inscription. The language of the inscription is a mixture of Persho-Arabic, and Turkish. On this account, It is open to more than one interpretation.

Below are given three of such interpretations :-

(1) "When Murad saw the building of Baba Nanak, the Prophet of God, fallen in ruins, he built a new one instead, with the help of his own hands so that it may stand as a monument in history for generations to come, and that the meritorious act of his fortunate disciple may last for aye."

(2) "Whoever saw this sacred place of Baba Nanak *Faqir* was granted fulfilment of his heart's desire by the Great God and Seven Angels helped him. Its date lies in the line "He caused a spring of Grace to flow for His lucky disciple"-year 927H."

(3) "In memory of the Guru, that is the Divine Master Baba Nanak *Faqir* Aulia, this building has been raised anew, with the help of seven saints, and the chronogram reads : The blessed disciple had produced a spring of grace'-year 927 H".

The last of these is the one accepted by Principal Teja Singh and Dr Ganda Singh and given by them in their book '*A Short History of the Sikhs*'

Another rendering which the Central Sikh Committee, Baghdad, got done in Panjabi with the help of some local teachers and sent to Bhai Kahn

Singh for incorporation in his *Maha Kosh : Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature* would be as follow :

‘See ! How the Great Provident Lord fulfilled the wish that Baba Nanak’s building was raised anew; the seven great Saints helped in this; and the chronogram reads: : ‘The blessed disciple has started a spring of grace for water in the earth.’-year 927H.’

Whatever may be the correct-rendering of the inscription, it clearly shows that the building with the platform was erected by a faithful Baghdadi disciple of the Guru in commemoration of Guru Nanak’s visit to that place. It also shows that the Guru was adored and held in great esteem by the people of Baghdad. Third, that the Guru visited Baghdad in 927 Hijri or 1520-1 A.D.¹ Swami Anandachrya has stated in his book, *The Snow Birds*, that in a shrine outside Baghdad he found another inscription which he translated as under :

‘Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to *Faqir* Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master’s word like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose.’

This inscription also testifies to the great success which the Guru had at Baghdad. It also shows that when the Master left his disciples, he left with them his word, the divine Song, on which their souls could rest and thrive. This Bahlol *Faqir* was probably a successor of Bahlol Dana, whose tomb exists in the room adjoining the one containing the Master’s platform. He must have met the Guru in the same place where the *Pir* met him and where, in after years, some disciple of the Guru erected a building to commemorate the event. The inscription which the *Swami* saw was most probably on the outer gate. The Sikh soldiers who visited the shrine during the Great War found that there was an inscription above the outer gate, but it had become worn off and illegible.

1. During the Great War, when Baghdad was conquered by British Indian troops, the place sacred to the memory of Guru Nanak was discovered by some Sikh *Sardars*. A beautiful small memorial in the form of a Sikh Gurdwara has since been erected upon the spot through the efforts of the local Central Sikh Committee.’

Dr Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak*, p.23.

In the headline to the poem¹ which the *Swami* composed on reading the inscription it is stated that the inscription was dated 912 Hijira. The figure 912 seems to be due to a misreading of the one given in the original inscription. Considering that the figure there has been worn out and rendered obscure, there is nothing strange or incredible in its having been misread by the *Swami*, others have read it as 917.

All doubts about the figure disappear in view of the chronogram which indicates 927. This year-927 A.H. or 1520-21 A.D.-corresponds to the one generally found in all accounts of the Guru's life as the year of the Guru's sojourn in Baghdad.

The Guru stayed at Baghdad for about four months as stated also in the above-said poem. During this period he converted to his faith all the *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, and others who came to him. Of course, the conversion of their followers was automatic.

1. The whole poem is given below :-

'On reading an Arabic inscription in a shrine outside the town of Baghdad, Dated 912 Hejra.

Contd. for the next page

'Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit, discoursing of fraternal love and holy light, O Guru Nanak, Prince among India's holy sons !

What song from the source of the Seven Waters thou didst sing to charm the soul of Iran !

What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests thou didst carry to the vine-groves and rose gardens of Baghdad !

What light from Badrinath's snow peaks thou didst bear to illumine the heart of Bahlol hearkened to thy saintly Persian disciple ?

Eight fortnights Bahlol hearkened to thy words on life and the path and Spring Eternal while the moon waxed and waned in the pomegranate grove beside the grassy desert of the dead.

And after thou hadst left him to return to thy beloved Bharat's land, the *Faqir*, it is said, would speak to none, nor listen to the voice of man or angel :

His fame spread far and wide and the *Shah* came to pay him homage. But the holy man would take no earthly treasures nor hear the praise of kings and courtiers.

Thus lived he-lonely, devoted, thoughtful-for sixty winters, sitting before the stone whereon thy sacred feet had rested.

And ere he left his House to Ignorance, he wrote these words on the stone : "Here spake the Hindu Gurur Nanak to *Faqir* Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's word like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose.'

During his sojourn in Baghdad the Guru met its ruler, Ismail Safwi, and persuaded him to give up tyrannizing over his subjects and become a just and kind ruler. When the Guru made ready to depart, Ismail Safwi presented to him a robe as a token of his love and reverence. On it were worked out in embroidery praises of God and some verses from the *Quran*. This robe or *chola* is believed to be the one preserved by the Sikh priests of Dehra Baba Nanak in the modern district of Gurdaspur.

Leaving Baghdad, the Guru visited Baku, Tuhuran, Asfhan and other places in Persia. Thence he went into Turkistan. Then entered Afghanistan. A Sikh temple at Kabul preserves the memory of the Guru's visit to that place. Another Gurdwara at the water springs of Askara, about nine miles from Kabul, is also associated with the Guru's name. But not much is known about the Guru's tours in these parts.

It is recorded that when Guru Nanak visited Baghdad, all wells in that city yielded only brackish water. The water of the well which was dug at a place pointed out by the Guru turned out to be fresh. This well is near the platform referred to above and up to now this well is the only one there whose water is not saline but fresh.

THE HOLY HAND-PRINT

In due course the Guru returned to India. Passing through Peshawar, he crossed the Indus and entered the Panjab. Not long after, he reached Hasan Abdal, then a great centre of Muhammadan religion, situated about thirty miles from the modern town of Rawalpindi, Pakistan. He halted near the base of a bleak mountain outside the town. On the top of the hill there then lived a Muslim *Faqir*, named Baba Hassan Abdal, Wali Qandhari.¹ He had made himself a little house and a sanctuary beside a spring which existed there. The spring fed a well near the house in which the *Wali* collected the water. That was the only spring in the locality, and hence, the only source of water supply for the people near-about. *Wali* Qandhari, who was a petty-souled occultist, was cut to the quick when he heard that the Guru had acquired a great name and following in the locality. Some of the *Wali's* own disciples also spoke to him very highly of the Guru's spiritual greatness. This incensed the shallow-hearted *faqir*. He vowed to make the whole town with their new Guru die for want of water. He closed the outlet of the well whereby the spring-water used to flow down to the people below. This was not the first time that he had given his neighbours vent, in this way, to his wrath against people of Hasan Abdal. The whole town was plunged into sorrow. All entreaties failed to appease the *faqir's* anger born of jealousy. 'Go to him', said he, pointing in the direction of the Guru. The people were in great distress. They refused to let Bhai Mardana have a drink from their little stores of water. 'Why not implore your Master for it?' said they.

The Guru had hoped that the *Wali*, who called himself a seeker of God, would relent. But he soon found that the *Faqir's* heart was as bleak as the mountain over which he lived. The Guru would not work a 'miracle, if he could avoid it, i e., he would not employ his spiritual powers unless it was found

1. Baba Hasan Abdal Sayyid of Sabzwar (Khurasan) had come to India with Mirza Shahrukh. He died in Qandhar. (*Mohan. Kosh*)

absolutely necessary for the benefit of the people. So he resolved to try what appeals in the name of God might do to arouse mercy in the heart of the *Wali*. He sent Mardana, who felt awfully thirsty, to request the *Wali* to give him a drink and to let the water flow down as before. The *Wali*, however, haughtily refused to let Mardana have a drop. 'Go to him', said he. 'If he has the powers which the foolish people credit him with, he can surely end their misery by digging up a fresh spring. If he has no such powers, let him come to me in person and give up deceiving the people.' He said more in the same angry tone.

Mardana returned thirsty as he was, and told the Guru how he had fared. The Guru sent him again and charged him to use great humility of address and demeanour in making the appeal on behalf of himself and the inhabitants of the town. Three times did Mardana go and three times was he tuned back without a drop to drink. Then the Guru lifted a small stone near which he was sitting and told Mardana to dig there; for a spring of clear, cool water was flowing underneath. Mardana did as bidden. A stream of crystal clear water came out from the place and washed the Guru's feet. The *Wali's* well dried up simultaneously. The new spring was larger than the old one on the bleak hill. Water began to flow in numerous channels and to irrigate the barren land all around. Thus did the Guru not only release the people from the tyranny of *Wali Qandhari*, but also made them happy and prosperous by providing them with an abundant, constant supply of cool, clear water.

Wali Qandhari was angrier still. In great wrath he hurled a huge rock at the Master. The Master was cleaning his teeth with a *datan*. When he saw the fast-advancing rock, he lifted his arm with the hand opened out in order to check the rock. It struck his hand and stood still in its downward career. An impression of the open hand of the Master was made on the rock at the point of contact. It exists up to this day and is called *Panja Sahib* or the Holy Hand-Print.¹

Wali Qandhari's pride was humbled. He came down to meet the Guru. He bowed at his feet and begged forgiveness for his folly. The ever-generous Guru, who despised no sinner but only felt pity for him at his fall, and did all he could to lift him up from his degradation, not only forgave the *Wali of Qandhar*, but also opened his dry, callous, haughty heart to the Divine inflow. 'Don't

1. See *Occult Science in India*, by Louis Jacolliot where authenticated instances are given of heavy material object being moved about by spiritual force alone.

forget,' said the Guru, 'that God is Love. He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in Him. He in whose heart there is no place for Love, can never know what God is. Hence, he can never know true joy or lasting peace. If you remember this, you will ever try to serve your fellowmen; for they are all His children. You will not find it possible then to sit aloft over a mountain, careless of the woes and ills of mankind. You will do your very best to alleviate and relieve them, you will mix with the people, be one of them, share their joys and sorrows, and lift them to the feet of God. Doing this, you will be truly religious; for true worship comprises love, service, devotion-noble thoughts, humane feelings, kindly acts, and devout prayers. Always remember that you will have to render an account of your life when the angel of Death takes you away. All your actions, good and evil, will stand up as witnesses in the court of God. There the actions performed here in the world, and not boasts and profession made here, will determine your fate. Prepare for that Day of Reckoning while you possess the opportunity and the power to do so. who knows when the call may come ? Be ready at all times to appear before the Great Judge. Utilize every minute of your life in efforts to win His pleasure.'

Wali Qandhari's heart was purified and invigorated with a new life. On the place where the Guru sat stands a beautiful Gurdwara called *Panja Sahib* or the Holy Hand Print.¹ Years ago, the rock was continuous right to the place where the Guru had sat and imprinted his palm in the rock. If anybody then stood at the top of the hill, near the Qandhari's hut, and looked down towards Panja Sahib, the rock presented an appearance which convinced the observer that it must have been thrown; for it looked like a pile that had been pushed and that had gone rolling down suddenly stopped in its downward career. Many people, who saw it then, testify to the impression. But now the rock round Panja Sahib had been cut away to make room for a road and some buildings, including the Gurdwara.

After a few days' stay at Hasan abdal, the Guru returned to the Panjab in 1578 BK or 1521 A.D.

1. Like numerous others this Gurdwara is now in Pakistan and the Sikhs are debarred from visiting, maintaining and managing it. Formerly a great fair was held there on the Baisakhi day (April 13). each year to which Sikhs and Hindus in large numbers flocked from all over the sub-continent. But now only a limited number of pilgrims from India are permitted to visit the Gurdwara on that day.

BABAR'S INVASION

The reader will remember that several years before, when the Guru visited Saidpur (Eminabad) in 1566 Bk, when Babar was as yet suffering terrible reverses in his native land, and was uncertain of reattaining or winning back his ancestral territory, the Guru had foretold the advent of that Mughal into India. Guru Nanak had said then that there would be terrible bloodshed, rape, rapine, and devastation in the land. Saidpur or Eminabad, where the prophecy was uttered, was to feel the invader's wrath in 1578 Bk./1521 A.D.

While returning from his western tour, the Guru saw in his clairvoyant vision that the ravenous, success-intoxicated hordes of Babar, which that invader self-complacently called 'the armies of Islam bent on Holy War', were sweeping down on India. The Guru knew what was coming. He saw the dire doom that was about to fall as a thunderbolt on the inhabitants of Saidpur, where dwelt his dear disciple, Bhai Lalo. His compassionate heart went out to the prospective sufferers. The patriot in him was stirred to the depths. But what could he do for his country? He had no army at his back with which he could have saved his countrymen from ravage and ruin, and force the invader to desist from wanton bloodshed, rape, and rapine. All the same, his love for mankind would not let him stay away from the scene of woe and suffering. Perhaps he might be able to effect a change for the better in the heart of the invader. In any case, he would be in the midst of his unfortunate, suffering brethren. He could not avert the catastrophe which came thundering on their devoted heads, but he would share their woes and misery, and try to lighten the burden of their grief. Being what he was, a lover of mankind, he could not have acted otherwise; 'for love as we know it in this world is almost inseparable from suffering. Not only are we prepared to suffer for those whom we love; but also the fellowship which love establishes makes us share such sufferings as may have to be borne by those whom we love.'

1. *Memoirs of Babar.*

So from Hassan Abdal he hastened towards and soon reached Saidpur. The armies of Babar had not been heard of there as yet. But they came soon. It was Babar's third invasion. At first he reduced Bhera and then marched on Sialkot. Everywhere the people found themselves between the devil and the deep sea. If they submitted to Babar and supplied him with provisions, they exposed themselves to the wrath of the Emperor of Delhi, who would surely take them to task after Babar returned to his native land in the manner of Taimur. If they did not submit to Babar, he would kill them, plunder and burn their homes, and take away their women and children as slaves. 'The people of Sialkot submitted and saved their possessions.' But they saved little else from Babar's lascivious army. In 1521 A.D./ 1578 Bk Babar reached Saidpur. The *Pathan* rulers of the place decided to resist the invader. The *Pirs* and *Mullas* promised to help them with their spells and incantations. A life of ease, tyranny, and ignoble pleasures had sapped the strength of the *Pathans*. Moreover, their arrowas and spears and unwieldy elephants could be of little use against the guns and matchlocks of the invader. They had to yield. All of them were put to the sword¹

Then started the plunder and massacre in the city. All men that were found there were murdered in cold blood. Women, whether of high or low families and castes, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, were dragged by the hair in the dusty streets, beaten, outraged, and forced amid tortures to disclose their hidden jewellery and valuable property. The soldiers, intoxicated with victory and wine spared neither child, woman, nor old man. Women and children were led into captivity. All men who somehow escaped the sword were made prisoners and forced to carry their plundered property to the camp

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1. Cf. *Memoirs of Babar*, vol. II, page 149, Erskine's historical supplement where it is written :- "He advanced to Sialkot, the inhabitants of which submitted and saved their possessions; but the inhabitants of Saidpur, who resisted, were put to the sword, their wives and children carried into captivity, and all their property plundered."

It has to be noted with regret that among the gaps which occur in the *Memoirs of Babar*, as recorded by himself, one is about the period from 926 to 932 A.H. / 1520 to 1526 A.D. These gaps have been filled up by the translator with his historical supplements based on other books about the period. If Babar had left a record of the events of this period, he would surely have mentioned his meeting with the Guru. The part played by the Guru in reforming the Emperor would have then acquired unassailable recognition.

of the victorious army. Such was the 'Holy War' of Babar for success in which he failed not to invoke the aid of God. The neighbouring villages were also treated in the same manner. Sword, fire, rape and rapine spread desolation all round.

The Guru and Mardana were at Saidpur when Babar's armies fell upon that city. Both of them were taken up prisoners, Guru Nanak was given a load to carry and Mardana was required to act as a groom for the horse of one of the commanders named Mir Khan.

The weight on his head the Guru did not feel. It did not seem to touch him at all ; for there was a far heavier weight pressing on his patriotic, compassionate heart. With eyes, full of tears, he was the miserable plight of his countrymen and country women. His heart felt as if pressed by an unbearable burden. He saw how ladies, who had thought it a sin and disgrace to let an outsider have even a glance at their faces, were then, after day-light dishonour and outrage, being forced to march uncovered in the company of their ravishers and torturers. All this filled him with deep sorrow. He asked Mardana to play the rebeck as the Word of God had come. 'Let go the horse,' said he. 'It will follow us all right.' Mardana did as bidden. Music on the rebeck began. People were amazed at what they considered the uncommon callousness of a *Faqir* who could find it in his heart to play the rebeck in such woeful company. They looked at the Guru and the rebeck-player. They were wonder-struck to see the load on the Guru's head lifted up a foot above his head and carried by the air. Mir Khan's horse followed Mardana as if it had known and loved him for years. The Guru then lifted his voice and poured out his heart in a song which may be translated as follows :-

'They whose beautiful tresses shone with lustre, and the partings of whose hair were lined with vermilion.

Have their locks now shorn with scissors and dust is thrown upon their heads and necks.

They used to live their palatial private chambers; now they cannot find a seat even in public.

Hail, O Father ! hail !

O Primæval Being, no one can know Your limits or comprehend Your ways;
You work out Your Will and beholds the scenes thus enacted.

When they were married, they looked charming fair beside their spouses;

They came seated in palanquins; ivory bangles decorated their arms;
 Water was waved around their heads¹, and glittering fans were waved over them.
 A hundred thousand rupees they got as gift as they sat, and a hundred thousand as
 they stood up.

Eating coco-nuts and dates they sported and enjoyed themselves on their cosy
 couches.

But now ropes are fastened round their necks, and broken are their strings of
 pearls.

The wealth and beauty, which afforded them merriment and pleasure, have now
 become their baneful foes;

Orders were given to the soldiers, and they dishonoured and took them away as
 captives.

If it please God, He bestows honour and greatness; if it please Him, He awards
 punishment.

If they had thought of God in time, this retribution would not have fallen on their
 heads.

The rules (whose duty was to oppose the invader and protect the people) had lost
 all sense of that duty in joys, spectacles, and pleasures.

Now, when Babar's rule has been proclaimed and his cohorts are ruling over the
 land, even the *Pathan* princes get no food.

Some lost their five times of prayer, others lost their hour of worship.

Without bath and without their sacred squares how should the Hindu women,
 thus driven abroad, engage in worship and apply the frontal marks?

They had never thought of Ram, now they are allowed even to say *Khuda*.²

Some may return home alive; and others may meet them and enquire about their
 lost ones;

But some are destined to set and weep in pain.

That alone will happen which pleases God, Nanak; what is man ?

Rag Asa.

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1. The bridegroom's mother or elder sister waves a pot of water around the bride's head and then drinks it, so as to take all her ills on herself. The bridegroom has to take hold of the pot and stop his mother or sister from drinking the water.
 2. That is, formerly these Hindu women had not prayed and worshipped in the Hindu way and had never uttered Ram, the Hindu name of God. Now, even if, in order to please their cruel Muhammadan captors, they become ready to utter *Khuda*, the Muhammadan name of God, they are not allowed to do so.

The heavenly, doleful music and the divines, soul-inspiring hymn were heard far and near by the miserable crowd. Everyone forgot his distress. All turned their thoughts on God. Mir Khan happened to come that way. He saw his horse following Mardana, while the latter was playing sweet, sacred music on his rebeck. He was astonished to see that the Guru's load was raised a cubit over his head without apparent support. Anyhow, the Guru did not seem to feel its weight. He saw how Guru Nanak, with a strange glory lighting his countenance, and quite oblivious of the heavy load on his head, was pouring forth his heart in a song which, like a shower of blessing rain in summer's burning heat, soothed and cooled the woe-laden hearts of the captives. Mir Khan did not understand what the Guru sang; yet he could not but feel the effect of the accompanying music and observe how spell-bound were all who heard and understood it. He shook his head in wonder that a man who could sing under such circumstances with such effects, and went his way.

The camp was reached at last. The captives were set to grind corn for the victorious army. Guru Nanak and Mardana, too, got each a hand-mill and a measure of corn to grind.¹ On looking round, the Guru saw how men and women who had rolled in wealth and luxury, were performing menial labour in order to save their skins. The sight again touched his heart. He heaved a sigh as a father would do on seeing his sons and daughters in woe. But the very next moment his spirit climbed up to the bosom of the Dispenser of all joy and sorrow. Sitting in His loving arms, he forgot his captivity and labour. He sat with eyes closed, a veritable picture of peace, equanimity, and joy. Mardana sat by his side, playing sweet music on the rebeck. Their handmills went on revolving of their own accord.

Mir Khan, who had on the way heard the Guru's song and noticed its deep, soothing effect on the captives, talked of it to Babar. The Emperor said that if he had known that the city contained such men of God, he would have spared it. Thereafter, Mir Khan and Babar went to the captive's camp. They saw the Guru sitting in a trance and Mardana playing rebeck by his side, while their hand-mills were revolving fast of their own accord. Babar and his companions stood gazing in wonder at the strange captives.

1. The hand-mill or *chakki* which Guru Nanak was given to grind corn with is preserved at Eminabad in a Gurdwara called *Chakki Sahib*,

After a time the Guru opened his eyes and sang a divine Song about the greatness of God and the littleness of man. Here is a rendering of that Song Divine :-

'No one can kill him, O kind One, whom You preserves.
 How can Your praises be counted ?
 You have saved countless beings.
 Preserve me, O Beloved, preserve me; I am Your slave, my Lord !
 My true Lord pervades sea and land, the nether and the upper regions.
 You did preserve Jaideva and Nama, Your dear devotees.
 You did save those on whom You did bestow Thy Name.
 You did preserve saint Kabir and Trilochan who loved Thy Name.
 You did preserve Ravidas, the tanner, who is numbered among Thy devotees.
 Nanak, low of caste and family utters this supplication-
 "Extricate me, O Lord, from the ocean of the world, and make me Thy own".'

On hearing this the Emperor bowed and saluted the Guru and declared, 'I see God in the face of this holy *faqir*.' He then expressed his regrets for what had been done to the Guru, and asked him to accept a present from him. All his courtier saluted the Guru.

'For myself,' replied the Guru. 'I need something that you can give. But if you really mean to make an offering to a man of God, then release all these captives and restore to them their plundered property.'

Babar gave immediate orders accordingly. The captives were told to go with what they could recover of their property. But they refused to do so unless their liberator went with them, for Babar seemed to be inclined to keep the Guru for his own edification. Babar agreed. But he requested the Guru to see him again. 'If it please God, I shall do so, certainly,' replied the Guru and left for the city.

On reaching Saidpur, he saw the grim spectacle of countless corpses, lying scattered in the city, and houses, streets, and lanes all covered with human blood¹ The sight touched his heart. He bade Mardana play the rebeck, for the Word of God had come. The Song of lamentation which he sang can be translated as under :-

1. In his hymn of prophecy and lament, sung several years before the sack of Saidpur, the Guru had called it 'the city of corpses'. The sight that was now before him must have been present before his mind's eye when he applied that graphic epithet to the unfortunate city.

'Where are those sports, those stables, and those horses brave ?

Where are those trumpets, horns, and bugles?

Where are those who, with their swords buckled on, looked so mightily in battle array ?

Where are those bright scarlet uniforms ?

Where are the mirrors and where the faces fair ? We see them here no longer.

This world is Thine, O Lord of the earth.

In a moment did You make and unmake at Thy pleasure and Will.

You did distribute and redistribute wealth as You pleases.

Where are those houses, those mansions, and those palaces grand ?

Where are those magnificent, beautiful seraglios ?

Where are those cosy couches and where those women, a sight of whom banished sleep ?

Where are those betels, those betel-sellers, and those fair ones ? The have vanished all.

For the sake of wealth, many are ruined;

This wealth has disgraced numerous persons.

It cannot be amassed without sin, and it goes not with man when he passes away.

Him whom the Creator wants to destroy, He first deprives him of virtue.

When they heard the Emperor coming, countless *Pirs* tried by magic and incantations to thwart his plans and check his progress.

Babar came all the same, and burnt houses, mansions, palaces and all;

He cut princes into pieces and had them rolled in dust.

No Mughal was rendered blind; no Priest wrought any miracle.

The Mughals and *Pathans* have measured swords on the field of battle;

Fierce and bloody had been the contest.

One side aimed and fired their guns and matchlocks, the other rushed out elephants in the van.

Those whose hour had come had to die, my friend.

There were wives of Hindus, of Turks, of *Bhattis*, and of Rajputs.

Some of them had their robes torn from head to foot;

The dwelling places of others were made their places of cremation.

How did they, whose husbands came not home, pass their night ?

The Creator acts and causes others to act as it pleases Him.

To whom should man complain ?
 Pain and pleasure, weal and woe, are all according to Thy pleasure;
 To whom shall we go with appeals and cries ?
 The Lord ordains as it pleases Him;
 All shall happen as He Wills.
 Man must get, O Nanak, as He did allot;
 His Will shall ever prevail.'

Rag Asa .

The news was soon abroad that, through the intercession of Guru Nanak, Babar had released the captives of Saidpur, restored their property to them and recalled the military posts which had been stationed round the city. These who had fled on the arrival of the invaders, now returned to Saidpur to dispose of their dead and to set their houses in order. When Mardana heard men and women waiting for their dear ones who had been massacred by Babar's hordes, he ask the Guru why so many innocent persons had been done to death along with the few *Pathans* who had done wrong. The Guru said, 'Go and sleep under that tree there. I shall answer your question when you awake.' Mardana, accordingly, went and lay down under the tree. A drp of honey fell on his naked breast. Ants came to drink it. One of them bit Mardana. He awoke and crushed all of them with his hand. Seeing this, the Guru said, 'Mardana, what you have done just now provides the answer to your question.' One ant had bitten you, yet you killed all of them. Thus do the innocent suffer along with the guilty.' Mardana fell at the Guru's feet. The inhabitants of Saidpur became the Guru's disciples.

The Guru learnt that there were yet others of his countymen in Babar's captivity. Many people of the neighbouring villages had not been released. Babar's soldiers had kept with them many beautiful women of Saidpur and of the neighbouring villages. The Guru's heart could not find rest until they, too, were released. So he started towards the camp again, but all alone this time. It was early in the morning yet. Amid the chirping of birds in the trees, bushes and the sky, the Guru went on, thinking of the inhuman slaughter of the weak, innocent, unarmed people. Reaching near Babar's camp, early in the morning, the Guru raised his voice into a song in which he poured forth the

agony of his heart in an invocation to the Creator of both the slayers and the slain; he even arraigned Him for taking sides.¹ Thus he sang :-

'O God, You have taken Khurasan under Your protection, and exposed India to terror.

The Creator takes no blame to Himself : it was Death disguised as a Mughal that You did send to make war on us.

When there was such slaughter, such lamentation didn't You, O God, feel pain?
Creator, You belongs equally to all.

If a powerful one beat another powerful one, it is no matter for anger.

But if a ravening lion fall upon a herd of cows, then the Master of the herd should show his manliness.

The Lodhi dogs, who have spoiled the princeless jewel that India is, will be wiped off from memory when they are gone.²

O God, You brings people together and you Yourself separates them-lo ! this is Your greatness.

If any one give himself a great name and enjoy himself to his heart's content.

In God's view he is as a worm which nibbles corn;

But he who dies while yet alive, and ever repeats His Name, may,

O Nanak, win lasting merit.'

Rag Asa.

Babar heard the Song. He could not understand what it meant; but the plaintive notes of music that came to him on the wings of the still, morning air went deep into his heart. He sent for the Minstrel of God. Yes, it was he, the liberator of the Saidpur captives. Seating him respectfully by his side, he asked him to sing the hymn again and explain it to him. The Guru did so. When explaining the purpose of the hymn, he lamented the butchery of unarmed

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1. It is not difficult to imagine what he would have done, if he had been in the position of Guru Gobind Singh, If he had a nation at his back. As it was, he could only utter a cry of anguish at the helplessness of his countrymen and wish that the cows should become lions. But what would he have not done, if he had a nation at his back? Yet, he did not sit down in impotent rage and utter idle jeremiads. He did as much as was possible to do in the circumstances. He set about creating a nation that would wrest the sword from the tyrants' hands and use it in self-defence, for the protection of the weak, and in the task of liberating the country from their accursed rule.
 2. That is they did not offer effective resistance to the Mughals and lost such a valuable realm.

people at the hands of Babar's soldiery. Babar felt the justice of the Guru's rebuke. Full of remorse, he tried to win the pleasure of this man of God, who could not only feel so strongly for his people in woe, but who could speak so fearlessly to a dreaded invader and conqueror. He behaved most respectfully towards the Guru. He praised him and opening his *bhang* pouch, offered him some. The Guru replied that he had already taken a species of *bhang* whose intoxication would never subside. Babar asked what that *bhang* was. The Guru replied with the following hymn :-

'O God, fear of Thee is my *bhang*; my heart is the pouch therefor;
 I have become intoxicated and freed from all attachments.
 My hands are the beggar's bowl: it is a sight of Thee that I hunger for,
 And for that do I ever beg at Thy door.
 I practise having Thee ever in sight,
 I am a beggar at Thy door; grant me alms, O Bounteous Lord
 Saffron, flowers, musk, and gold are applied to bodies of all;¹
 The unique quality of sandal and saints is this that they impart their fragrance to
 all.
 Nobody calls clarified butter or silk impure; touch does not pollute them;
 Such is a saint, to whatever caste he may belong;
 Who is ever imbued with Thy name and lives in humility, and keeps his mind fixed
 on Thee.
 May, Nanak, obtain alms at the doors of those
 Who are imbued with Thy Name, live in humility, and keep their minds ever fixed
 on Thee.'

Rag Tilang.

The Emperor was so pleased with the Guru that he begged him to stay with him and sing to him his sweet, inspiring Songs of God. The Guru agreed to stay for three days. Many a soul-stirring Songs did he sing to Babar and his nobles; many an illuminating discourse on the duties of kings and rights of man did he deliver to the would-be Emperor of India. But all along, he could not suppress sighs of pity and sympathy when he thought of his fellow-being in Babar's captivity. On the third day of his stay at Babar's camp, he had an opportunity to see some of the unfortunate creatures, engaged in hard labour.

1. That is, used by all, whether high or low.

The sight of his suffering countrymen sent the Guru into a trance. He became unconscious. The Emperor felt perturbed. He stood over the Guru, and asked the bystanders what had happened to the *faqir*. He was told that on beholding the wrath of God the *faqir* was in suffering, and had passed into a trance. Babar became alarmed. He thought that perhaps the '*Faqir of Allah*' was about to die. He asked the people to pray to God for his recovery. After some time the Guru opened his eyes and regained consciousness. His countenance was brighter than ever. Babar saw this and said, 'O *Faqir of Allah*, grant me thy blessings.' The Guru replied, 'If thou desire to obtain the Grace of God, then release all who are yet prisoners in thy camp, both men and women.' Babar could not refuse. He issued immediate orders. With tears of joys and gratitude in their eyes, the captives were seen leaving the camp. Babar again said to the Guru, 'Now, O Holy man of God, do pray for me that my empire in India may last from generation to generation.' The Guru replied, 'Thy empire shall last for a long time.' The Emperor then asked the Guru for instructions suitable to his position.

The Guru replied, 'If thou desire to establish an empire in India, be one of the people of India. Make this country thy home. Treat thy Hindu and Muhammadan subjects alike. Let thy rule be a rule of justice and kindness. Deal mercifully with the vanquished and oppress not the non-combatants. Give up wine, gambling, and other ignoble habits of body and mind. Worship God in spirit and in Truth.'

'Needless to say that Babar did value and follow all this in his future life, and history bears abundant testimony to this. But for those who have read of Babar's power, intelligence, and for his nobleness, the patriotic part played by the Guru does not stand in need of comments. He met the most terrible man on earth, a wink of whose brow was a sufficient order for putting millions to the sword, and, by his able intercession, turned him into the kindest ruler. This was the service that the Guru rendered to his country and countrymen.'¹

The Guru stayed three days in Babar's camp. At the final parting, the Emperor pressed the Guru to embrace Islam, which recognised only One God, as preached by the Guru himself. Moreover, on embracing Islam, he would have the additional benefit of the mediation of God's holy and last Prophet, Muhammad. The Guru replied :-

1. G.A.Natesan, *Ramanand to Ram Tirath*.

'There are hundreds of thousands of Muhammads, but only One God.
 The Unseen is True and free from anxiety.
 Many Muhammads stand in His court;
 So numberless that they cannot be reckoned.
 Prophets have been sent and they have come into the world;
 Whenever His pleases, He had them arrested and brought before Him.
 The slave Nanak has ascertained
 That God alone is pure and all else, impure.'

Instead of getting angry or offended at this out-spoken language, the
 Emperor invited the Guru to ask him a favour. The Guru replied :-

'It is One God Who has commissioned me .
 Everyone partakes of His gifts.
 He who looks for human support
 Loses both this world and the next.
 There is but One Giver, all creatures are beggars at His door.
 They who forsake Him and attach themselves to others,
 Lose all their honour thereby.
 Kings and Emperors are all made by Him.
 There is none equal to Him..
 Saith Nanak, "Hear, Emperor Babar,
 The *faqir* who begs of Thee is a fool."

The Guru then left Babar's presence to resume his travels for the uplift of
 his follow-beings.

SETTLES AT KARTARPUR

After his four extensive tours to east, south, north and west, extending over about twenty four years, the Guru settled at Kartarpur in 1522 A.D., and stayed there for some *eight* years at a stretch.

As we know, his wife and sons were living there since the foundation of that city. He now lived among his family and friends for some eight years at a stretch. He put off his extraordinary costume which he had donned when going on his tours, and dressed himself in the ordinary raiments of a householder. 'With a turban on his head, a cloth round his waist, and a sheet over his shoulder, he looked the impression of holiness.' This was another of his iconoclastic acts. The then prevalent usage and ideas were against it. When once a man had renounced his family life and put on an ascetic's dress, he could not resume his former life or dress. If he did so, he exposed himself to general odium. The Guru wanted to demonstrate that truly religious men were free to choose any manner of life and dress which they liked. As long as his inner self was in tune with the Lord, it mattered little what dress a man wore and what occupation he followed. He could not go wrong.

Hearing of his return and settlement at Kartarpur, men and women came to him from far and near to pay their homage and to listen to his discourses and Songs of the Lord. His father also came there with all his people. Sikh societies began to be formed.

All along, the Guru had been advocating a wholesome, harmonious combination of the cloister and the hearth. He had been telling to all who came to him for instruction that they should live lives of self-consecration and complete renunciation amid the ties, joys, duties, and functions of the world. Their was to be the path of dying life and not of living death. He now demonstrated how this was to be done. He lived among his family, friends, and disciples; busied himself in looking to their comfort and welfare like a conscientious householder. But he also lived in God, every moment of his life.

As he himself says in one of his Divine Songs:-

'So long as I think on Thee and repeat Thy Name I live.

Forgetting Thee, I die at once, my Lord.'

Rag Asa.

He toiled in the fields as a farmer, he worked in the kitchen, but he also sat on his *gaddi* or his seat as a Guru or Teacher of mankind, and sang divine Songs, which washed away all sinful thoughts and base proclivities from the hearts of the listeners and fills them with divine virtues. In addition to sowing wheat and other crops in the fields for the physical nourishment of his fellow-men, this old Father of his people also sowed the seed of Name, the sacred Song, in the hearts and souls of all who called him their own. Thus he lovingly toiled and sweated for his people so that he might give them the Bread of God to invigorate their bodies and nourish their souls. His wife joyfully co-operated with him in this labour of love for their world-wide family.

A large number of disciple gathered around the Guru at Kartarpur. He started a regular devotional service. He rose early in the morning, more than a watch before day-break, and had his bath, and so did the disciples. Before dawn *Japji* and *Asa di Var* were recited, followed by the singing and expounding of the Guru's hymns. Thus the day was started with hearts full of God. The evening service began in the third watch of the day with the singing of hymns. In the evening *Rehira*s was recited, followed by the singing of *Arti*, and at bed time the *Sohila* was sung. Thus every morning, noon, evening, and night the Guru's disciples were instructed to live in the light of his true teachings.

The time between the morning and evening services was spent in performing secular duties at the farm and the *dharma*sala. In the Guru's kitchen for all, food was served to all who came, after the morning and the evening service. Everyone, of whatever caste, creed, or status, was served alike. All sat together as they came, persons of all castes and creeds all mixed up together.

ACHAL BATALA AND MULTAN.

Years passed in this way. For the most part, the Guru had no intention to undertake long journeys any more. He was already well over fifty. He had been on the move, for more than twenty-four years. But it seems that he did not become altogether a home-keeping old man. He made short local tours, whenever he felt the urge within him. If loving hearts yearned for him, he went; for he was drawn by the force of love. On one occasion, however, he travelled much longer and farther off from his home. That was in the year 1529 A.D. He heard that on the occasion of the year's annual Shivratri fair to be held on the fourteenth day of the dark half of *Phagun* (February-March) at Achal Batala, in the modern district of Gurdaspur, the *Siddhas* or *Yogis* were about to assemble in unusually large numbers. Since the advent of the Guru, their influence had been on the wane. His repeated and successful encounters with them had deprived them of the position, they once held in popular estimation. This had naturally annoyed them. So they had determined to make one last effort to regain the ground that they had lost.

We have seen how the Guru had specially visited all the strongholds of the *Yogis* in India and inflicted on them crushing defeats in religious argument. By vanquishing them, the Guru had broken the spell of their power over the people. In this way, a great obstacle in the country's path to true piety, peace, and prosperity had been mostly removed. Yet, they were bestirring them selves to re-establish their waning influence. So the Guru resolved to scatter their order, once for all, by meeting and defeating them at Achal Batala. Hence, at the age of a little over sixty, he started from Kartarpur on his fifth and last tour. As we shall see, it proved to be longer than he had at first intended it to be. This time his dress was the usual dress of a householder.

The *Siddhas* had gathered at Achal Batala in unusually large numbers. By displays of supernatural powers, they were attracting the people and overawing them into submission. How could such a mighty order be ignored or displeased with impunity? They did not know that the great one, who had

proved superior to them at the Mansarowar Lake in the Himalayas, in the Kajli Ban in the Deccan, and in several other places, was coming again to squeeze them dry of all their pulpy pride and power.

Wearing the dress of an ordinary householder, he went there and sat a little apart from the crowd. Mardana played the rebeck. After a time, the Guru began to sing his divine Songs. Age had only added to the charms of his sweet, bewitching voice. His personality had become all the more magnetic. All who heard the Song flocked around him. Soon, a large crowd sat or stood around him, listening to his Songs of the Lord in a deep intoxication of joy. The *Siddhas* found themselves deserted and ignored. This made them jealous and angry. It was time for them to be up and doing. They were determined to meet, defeat, and humiliate him.

So determined, they went to the place where the Guru sat discoursing to the people. Their leader, Bhangarnath, started the discussion. In order to lower the Guru in the people's estimation, Bhangarnath asked the Guru why he had mixed acid with his milk; that is, why he, once a holy man, was now living a family life. 'You have given up,' said he, 'the life and dress of an ascetic. Evidently you have found yourself to be unequal to the effort of body, mind, and soul, required for that mode of deeply and truly religious life. The attachments and allurements of the world have proved too much for you. Otherwise, how could you have given up the ascetic's life and dress after having assumed them for so long? You have spoiled the little merit which you might have earned. And now you come to preach to the people that they should learn from your experience and lead worldly lives. Since you have failed to find God, you are advising others not to seek after Him. A good teacher of men you are indeed! And very pious and religious these simpletons who prefer your talks and songs to what we can do for them.'

The Guru smiled and said, 'O Bhangarnath, thy mother lacked skill. She did not know how to wash the churn and so spoilt the butter in producing thee. You people boast of having renounced the householder's life. On that account you despise the householders. But all the same, you feel not the least hesitation in going about begging for food and clothing at the doors of those very people. That is renunciation, indeed! To live lives of ease and plenty on the earnings of others, and to despise the simple folk who supply your wants and meet your needs! That is religion, indeed! I

would have none of it. With me true renunciation consists in renouncing even renunciation itself; in living pure and unpolluted amid the impurities and temptations of the world. True religion with me consists in furthering the progress of humanity towards a union with God. For me worship of God has two sides, a practical side, in our conduct, whereby our whole life becomes an act of worship; but worship must also have its own life in adoration, prayer, and communion. My religion bids me lead a life of love, service, and devotion amid my countrymen, be ever in tune with the Infinite amid the duties of life, and raise others to that level of the ideally religious life. This is what I try to do. This is what I have been teaching mankind throughout my life. This is what is needed most of all, by all and, particularly, by persons like you, who live as parasites on the toiling people. When you do nothing here, what can you obtain hereafter ?

The *Siddhas* had no reply to make to this. They tried to terrify the Guru and his audience by a fresh and more varied exhibition of their occult powers. The Guru sat unmoved, singing sweetly of the Lord. The crowd of listeners sat rapt and spell-bound, and cared not even to look at the frivolous-minded *Siddhas*. The latter, who knew only one means of influencing the people, then said to the Guru, 'Surely, you must have shown some miracles to these people and to the world at large. How else could you have acquired so much power over them ? Why don't you show some to us ?'

The Guru replied, 'To be frank, my friends, I have thoroughly weighted the *Yogis* and their *yoga* and have found them worth no thought. Man has no refuge except in God's Name and in the company of the holy. Listen to the Word of God as sung by this humble minstrel of His. You will then realize the power that is in His Name. Believe me, except the True Name I possess no miracle and I need no more.' Then he sang:-

'If I were to put on the dress of fire;
 If I were to bide in a house of snow;
 Were iron and steel to be my food;
 Were I to turn all my troubles to water and drink it;
 Were I to drive the earth as a steed;
 Had I the power to balance in a scale the firmament against a little weight used as a counterpoise;
 Were I to become so large that I could nowhere be contained;
 Were I to lead every one by the nose as a camel;

Had I such power in myself that I could perform all such things and cause others
to perform them,
It would all be in vain,
As great as the Lord is, so great are His gifts;
He bestoweth them according to His pleasure.
Nanak, on the servant whom He favours with His Grace
He bestows the glory of True Name
And the joy of living ever in Him.'

Majh Ki Var.

When the Guru thus declined to give them battle on their favourite point, they began to interrogate him regarding his faith, philosophy, and religion. They hoped to vanquish him. But once more they realized what many others had done before. The Guru was more than a match for all their combined wit, intellect, and reasoning. He thus vanquished in argument all *Siddhas*, *Yogis*, and priests who attended the fair and obliged the followers of the six schools of Hindu philosophy to bow before him. The *Yogis* complimented him on his success and gave him high praise.

It was now the time the *Yogis* took their daily wine and the cup was accordingly passed around. When it reached Guru Nanak, he asked what and what for it was. They said, 'It is the *Siddhas*' cup made from molasses and flowers of the *dhava* plant. It induces and aids *samadhi*. Try it.' The Guru declined the cup and said, 'I need no such wine. I take one of a different make, and derive unbroken intoxication therefrom.' 'What wine is that?' said they. The Guru, thereupon, uttered the following hymn:-

'Make divine knowledge thy molasses, meditation, thy *dhava* flowers, and good actions, thy fermenting bark to put into them.

Make the love of God thy furnace, devotion, the sealing of the still: in this way shall nectar be distilled

O dear, by quaffing the divine juice the mind becomes intoxicated and gets easily absorbed in God's love.

I have arranged to fix my attention on God day and night, and I hear the unbeaten music.

God is true, His cup is pure; He gives it to him to drink on whom He casts a favouring glance.

Why should he who deals in nectar feel any craving for wine ?

The Guru's word is nectar-speech; by drinking it man becomes acceptable to God. When man performs service at God's gate to get a sight of Him, what cares he for salvation or paradise ?

He who is dyed with God's praises feels no infatuation for the world and loses not his life in the game.

Saith Nanak, hear O Bharthari Yogi, I am intoxicated with the nectareous stream.'

Rag Asa.

The *Yogis* were rendered speechless. In answer to the *Yogis'* further questions, the Guru explained to them what distinctive qualities should mark an *Udasi* or hermit, an *Avdhut*, a *Yogi*, and a *Bairagi*. The Guru answered all their questions to their fullest satisfaction. They were much pleased and thanked the Guru for the light he had given them.

The gist of the discussion which the Guru had with the *Yogis* (*Siddhas*) was later embodied by him in a long poem called the *Siddha Gosht* or the Discussion with the *Siddhas*. It is embodied in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. In it the Guru maintained the superiority of a life of piety, love, and service, lived in the world over a life of physical inactivity lived away from it.

At the conclusion of the discussion, according to the Guru's own testimony as recorded in the *Siddha Gosht*, the *Siddhas* acknowledged him their Master and begged him most earnestly to bestow on them a little from that limitless treasure of Name which was his for ever. He fulfilled their wishes and slaked the newly arisen thirst of their souls for the Lord. They bowed to him and became his disciples and love-bound slaves for ever. Many of them, including Bharthari, whom the Guru had met before in the Deccan, gave up their manner of life and dress, and began to live as directed by the Guru. The power of the *Siddhas* was completely broken. They lost all influence with the people. Their number began to diminish very rapidly. Very grateful were the people for being thus relieved for ever from the manifold exactions of the *Siddhas*. That seems to have been the last Shivratri fair which the *Siddhas* celebrated at Achal Batala.

On the spot where the Guru sat and had the discussion with the *Siddhas*, stands a Gurdwara in commemoration of his victory over that once famous and mighty order.

From Achal Batala the Guru proceeded to Multan; for there Muslim *faqirs* in large numbers were oppressing and misleading the people. Having

visited the shrines of Bhagat Prehlad and Shams Tabrez, and having preached his message of love, service, and devotion to the people in those places, the Guru took his seat near the mausoleum of *Pir Baha-ud-Din*, which was in the charge of a celebrated *Sufi faqir*. Multan has ever been known for the unusually large number of *faqirs* and beggars living there. It was the same story then. Many parasitic persons lived there in the guise of *Faqirs* and *Sadhhus*. But they were, most of them, spiritually as dead as stones. They traded on the people's ignorance and superstitious. They were ever in fear lest some true one should come and, by disillusioning the simple crowds that fed and worshipped them, break the bubble of their hollow, tricky fame. This would mean ruin to the false ones. Guru Nanak had been in the locality for a few days only, but his name had come to be on everybody's lips. If he were to settle there for good, it would mean the undoing of the imposter hermits. They had also heard how he has vanquished the *Siddhas* and several renowned *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, and *Pandits*. All this could not but make them all the more sad and nervous.

So they assembled together to devise means for sending away the True One. This had to be accomplished before long, or it would be too late; for he would spoil the whole thing with his Songs and discourses. But they lacked the courage to go to him straight and give him a piece of their mind. Besides, they felt sure that he would not yield in that way. So they thought of a novel plan of conveying their mind to him. They sent to him a bowl of milk too full to contain a further drop. This was meant to inform the Guru that the city was already too full of hermits. There was no room for him there, just as there was no room for another drop of milk in the bowl.

Mardana requested the Guru to accept the milk which, he thought, had been sent by the *faqirs* as an offering. But the Guru smiled, shook his head, and placing a little jasmine flower on the surface of the milk in the bowl, bade the bearer thereof take it back to those who had sent him. It told them that, just as there was room enough for the jasmine flower in their cup, too full of milk to contain another drop, similarly there was room enough for him in Multan and in the hearts of the Multanis. Like that little flower, he would remain above them all and, without displacing or being a burden on any one he would shed the sweet fragrance which dwelt in his personality alone.

A little time after that, some of the more noted among the *Faqirs* and *Sadhhus* came to have a religious discussion with him. They hoped to defeat him in argument. But they soon discovered, what hosts of others like them

had discovered several times before, that he was too high for their dwarfed selves. They bowed to him and acknowledged him their Master. He instructed them in the principle of his Faith and made them spiritually alive. He taught them how their false renunciation was hampering the progress of their souls. He convinced them that true renunciation consists in remaining unaffected and pure amid the allurements and impurities of the world. They and all their followers, thereupon, fell at his feet and joined the Holy Fellowship which he had founded.

Since then the *Sufi Faqirs* have acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Guru and proudly remembered him as their teacher and guide. In his own time so great was the reverence which he had been able to inspire in the hearts of several Muslim *faqirs*, that one morning Pir Baha-ud-Din, a *Sufi Muslim Faqir* who had thousands of Muslim followers, suddenly turned his back on the *Ka'aba* and began to bow in his *Nimaz* in the direction of Kartarpur. When his astonished followers enquired from him the cause of his strange departure from the Muslim practice of bowing towards the *Ka'aba*, the *Pir* replied, 'I see the light of God in this direction, my friends. So I bow to Him wherever He be.'

CHAPTER 48

AT HOME TO ALL MANKIND

The tour to Achal Batala and Multan was the last of his tours. He returned to Kartarpur in about 1531 A.D. and began to live there as the old father of his people. He had been to distant places and had proclaimed his great message of love, work, service, and devotion in different lands. Wherever he had gone, the people had flocked to listen to his sacred Songs of the Lord, as thirsty travellers flock round an oasis in a wide desert. When he had left these places, the work of reclaiming others had been carried on by his faithful disciples. In each place a temple of God had been erected, a *Sat Sang*, or a Fellowship of Seekers of the True Lord, had been established, and the devoutest disciple had been placed in charge of the little colony. Morning and evening, the disciples of each place assembled in the temple of God and sang the Word of God as given to them by Guru Nanak. During the day, while carrying on their honest trades and occupations, they kept their thoughts ever fixed on the Guru and God. Regarding God as knowing every thought and watching every action of theirs, and having been taught by Guru Nanak to look upon all human beings as their own kith and kin, they ever toiled to be good men and neighbours, scattering benefits all round them, friends of all and enemies of none. To bring other people to the path laid down by the Guru, by showing to them the beauty of their own lives, was their chief delight. No wonder then that in distant places like China and Egypt, where no one could go afterwards to speak to the people about Guru Nanak and his Faith, he is still remembered with affection and reverence.

The life at Kartarpur was a demonstration of all his ideas and teachings but into actual practice. He had advocated a wholesome combination of action and devotion, a complete reconciliation between asceticism and the householder's life. He had said that both were necessary and should go hand in hand. There was a fatal falsehood in the idea that we should turn our back upon the world in order to love and realize God; that we could glorify our Creator by ignoring His creation. This ascetic method was, at best, an imper-

fect one; for it confused the world as God made it with the world as man had disfigured and marred it. We should not turn away from life, but should see God and His Glory in and through it. There was, of course, the temptation in this sinful world to love the creature more than the Creator, to forget the Giver in our infatuation for the gift; yet the true remedy for this did not lie in becoming indifferent to all created beings, but in so loving them that this love might lead us to the love of the Creator, till we come to love God in our neighbour and our neighbour in God. It was the duty of all religious people to carry their religious spirit and principles into the details of the secular life. Secular life was not to be denounced as an obstacle in the path of the soul's progress towards God. It should rather be the medium of our religious life, our vocation, the mode in which to realize our love for God and man.

Guru Nanak believed that, for a man who has become spiritually alive, action and devotion form a spiral stair by which he ascends to the Abode of the Lord. Before undertaking each action in his daily life, such a man prays for divine assistance; for no spiritual act can be complete till it has been first prayed for and then done. This practice ennobles his nature. After each occasion of prayer and action, he feels prompted to a purer prayer and a nobler act. In this way, he rises heavenwards. This was the path which Guru Nanak had shown to his people in all lands, and on which he now walked in the sight of all, so that all doubts about the practicability of his teachings should be removed. To the *Siddhas* and other ascetics he had, as stated already, said that it was finding God. True asceticism, he has said, consisted in looking for God in His creatures and in coming back with our treasure, as soon as we had found it, and sharing it with all whose souls were athirst for God, and even with those who knew not their soul or its need for God. This he had been doing all his life. He had been sharing his limitless treasures with all. He had enabled his people to find God in the world and then to exert themselves to find the world in God, to try to make all things according to find the world which he had shown them in his Songs of the Lord. At Kartarpur he set himself to show how this was to be done.

— He resumed his life of a tiller of soil and cultivator of human souls. In his fields he loved to raise crops of wheat and rice for the satisfaction of his people's physical hunger. But, at the same time, he sowed in their souls the seed of divine life, and nourished each seedling with fatherly love and care. He worked in the fields. His disciples, who came to him from far and near,

worked with him. It was a 'brotherhood of God-fearing republicans'. Here was a revolutionary idealism being put into practice by men who saw God in the world and the world in God, whome the Love and adoration of God pointed the way to the love and service of mankind. With the joy of uninterrupted communion with God enthroned in their hearts and souls, with the Word of Good ever on their lips, with their hands and feet ever busy in the service of God in man, they ever lived in God and God ever lived in them. This was Guru Nanak's noble family, his Holy Fellowship that he had come to establish in a world torn by hate, strife, and struggle.

To the Table of God laid by Guru Nanak all-men, women, and children, Hindus and Muhammadans, rich and poor, high and low, were equally welcome at all times. Bread and water were ready for all at all hours of the day; the bread of wheat as well as the bread of God, the water from the well as well the water of life everlasting, were freely given free to all from the in-exhaustible treasury of Guru Nanak. The hungry were fed, the diseased were healed, the distressed were comforted, the bereaved were consoled, and the restless, wandering souls were made steady in God.

Every morning, about a watch before daybreak, all would get up, bathe and sit in quiet contemplation of God. Then they sang to themselves the Word of God as given to them by the Guru. Then all assembled to chant together the great morning hymn of Guru Nanak called the *Asa di Var*. The morning congregation then broke up after prayers for the welfare of the whole world and for the prosperity of the Faith, and after the distribution of the sacred food. Then all repaired to their respective duties, some to work in the kitchen, some in the fields, some at the handmill, and some at the loom or needle. Then they would all assemble in the *Langar* to feed themselves from the Guru's store; for with them all that they had, whether produced by their own toil or by that of their friends and neighbours, belonged to the Guru.¹ Each found immeasurable joy in adding to the Guru's store. No one thought of being a drone. The day thus passed in useful activity; bodies employed in service and souls entwined around the feet of the Lord. In the evening all assembled again. After the evening Song and Prayers, all took their food and

1. '*Dana pani Guru ka, taihl bhawna Sikh*an di-bread water are God's, loving service alone is rendered by the Sikh,' has become a common saying among the followers of Guru Nanak.

retired to retired for the night. But before lying down to sleep, each one collected his soul, lifted it to the bosom of God, silently chanted the Song of Praise, the *Kirtan Sohila*, and lay down to sleep in the lap of his Master. Such was the life led by the Guru and his people in the blessed, holy colony at Kartarpur, and such is the life that the Guru wants all to lead, if they would taste true joy of life lived in God.

It was at Kartarpur that Bhai Mardana, Guru Nanak's rebeck-player, musician, and companion in most of his journeys, breathed his last. Guru Nanak had enquired from Bhai Mardana how he desired his body to be disposed of. He was a Muhammadan by birth but a Sikh by faith. He had no will apart from the will of the Guru. So he replied, 'When with thy grace, my spirit, the "I" in this mould of clay, goes to everlasting bliss, what matters it for me how the body is disposed of? Do unto it as thou pleasest. Only ferry me across this ocean of the world for the sake of the Word of God, which I have been singing to thee and thy people.' The Guru blessed his departing disciple and brother, and ordered that his body should be cremated. Mardana's son took his place as the rebeck-player and musician in the Guru's *darbar*.

The Guru's Sikhs, scattered over distant, different lands, constituted one big family, with Guru Nanak as the dear, old Father of them all. Each Sikh, wherever he was, worked for the Guru's family. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to the homeless, and to perform numerous other acts of love and sympathy was the delight of the Sikhs.¹ Each year, and oftener if possible, *Sangats* from all places that the Guru had visited in his younger days, came to Kartarpur in order to replenish their spiritual faculty at the Fountain head. Each brought for the Guru household articles, lovingly made or produced with his or her own hands. Grain, clothes, and numerous other such things were thus added to the Guru's store and thence distributed to all according to their needs.

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1. Munshi Sujana Rai of Batala, writing in 1695-98 A.D., testifies from personal observation that the Sikh considered it their religious duty to feed and serve all who called at their door. "The Faith", writes he, "which the Sikhs have in their Guru is seldom met with in other religions. They consider it an act of devotion to serve the passer by in the name of their Guru, whose Word they repeat every moment of their life. If a person turns up at their door at midnight, and calls in the name of Baba Nanak, though he may be a stranger, or even a thief, robber, or a scoundrel, they serve him according to his needs, as they would serve a brother and friend."

BABA BUDDHA, MUSLIM PIRS

One day, in the year 1575 Bk./1518 A.D, during one of his minor tours, the Guru was sitting under a tree near Ramdas in the district of Amritsar. A boy came that way, grazing cows. The Guru saw in this boy something which was to make him one of his most respected and renowned disciples. He sent for the boy, and, seating him near himself, asked him his name. "My name is Bura," replied the boy. 'I am a *Jat*, born at Kathunangal but now living in Ramdas.' The Guru then bade him go and look after his cows. The boy remained sitting and said, 'But Master, do tell me thy pleasure. Wherefor didst thou call me?' The Guru replied, 'That will do for the present. My purpose in calling you to me has been served. You may go.'

Bura went away. But he, too, had recognized his Master. His heart was dancing with joy. He could not sleep that night. The glorious, joy-inspiring person of the Guru was present before his mind's eye throughout the night, and he bowed to it again and again. Early next morning he started from home with some butter and milk as a humble offering for the Guru. Reaching the Guru's presence, he placed the milk and butter before the Guru and bagged for deliverance for birth and death. The Guru said, 'You are a child yet.' Go and make merry. Such serious thoughts are rarely found to interest boys of your age. How came you by them, dear boy ?'

Bura replied, 'Thus, O master. Some time back a band of *Pathans* passed by our village. They forcibly cut away all our crops-ripe, unripe, and all. We were all helpless. We were our-selves plundered in broad day-light, but could do nothing to thwart the tyrants. Since then the thought has ever been haunting me, "If all of us could not save our crops from the *Pathans*, who can save us from the hand of Death, who is far more powerful than the *Pathans* ? Who knows on whom, young or old, the hand of Death may fall next ? Who knows that I might be the next victim doomed to quit this life in the unripe condition

1. Having been born in 1563 Bk /1506 A.D. he was about twelve years old at the time.

of childhood?" This thought has made me restless. I had heard of you. When you called me to your presence, something within me was touched to the core. I felt an assurance slowly creeping into my heart that you possessed the power to allay my fear and fulfil my desire. Hence it is that I have again come to you unbidden. Turn me not away with a refusal. Let me be the slave for ever'

The Guru replied, 'You carry an old head on your boyish shoulders. You talk like an old man. All right, my *Buddha Balak*, my Old Child, listen to what I say and keep it ever in your heart and soul. God is far more powerful than Death. If you become His accepted servant, the hand of Death will not touch you. So, ever think of Him, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart. Let your body be busy in a loving service of God's creatures; and your heart, mind, and spirit be ever in tune with the Almighty Father. Then you need have no fears'

Bura became Bhai Buddha. He stayed with the Guru, listening joyfully to his Songs of the Lord, and doing all sorts of service for the Guru and his people. In a very short time, he came to be one of the most devoted and respected of the Guru's disciples. So well was the Master pleased with him that, a little before his own ascension, he appointed him to perform the sacred ceremony of impressing the saffron *tilak*, or the mark of Guruship on the forehead of the second Guru. This honourable privilege he continued to have till his death in 1688 Bk/1631 A.D. at the ripe age of one hundred and twenty five years. He had, by then, impressed the hundred and twenty five years. He had, by then, impressed the sacred mark on the foreheads of five successors of Guru Nanak, from Guru Angad to Guru Hargobind. In 1661 Bk/ 1604 A.D, he was made the first *Granthi* of the Golden Temple, Amritsar. He had the privilege of teaching *Gurmukhi* to Guru Hargobind and imparting him training in horsemanship and the use of arms.

It was during one of his minor tours into the neighbouring country that the Guru won to his Path two more renowned Muslim *Pirs*-Ubare Khan and Abdul Rahman. A friend of the former of these, Sheikh Malo by name, had met the Guru. Discerning the light of *Allah*, illumining the Guru's person, Malo had bowed to him. Guru Nanak had opened the eyes of his soul. He had become transfigured. He had obtained the gift of the Word of God from the Minstrel of God. He had been shown the way to the Abode of the Lord. His heart had tasted a joy which he would not exchange even with the pleasures of paradise. He hoped to meet and be one with the Supreme Spirit and cared not for even salvation or *Nirvan*.

Ubara Khan was also a seeker after the Lord. He had sat at the feet of many a *Pir* and *Faqir*, but the restless beating of his heart had not been quietened. The hunger for the Lord, which he felt in his mind and soul had not been assuaged. Once *Sheikh* Malo met him. Ubare Khan at once detected a change, a transfiguration, in the character, conduct, and outward appearance of his friend. 'So, Malo has met some Perfect One and got his whole being dyed in Heavenly Love and Light.' Thus thought Ubare Khan, as he saw his friend Malo. He enquired from his transfigured friend how he had come by his blissful condition.

'I shall tell', replied Malo, 'for a friend should share his joy with a friend who lacks good luck. But I fear, you will refuse to drink at my fountain of Life and Bliss; for it flows from the divinely illuminated form of one who is a "Hindu" by birth. Your Islamic pride, I fear, will keep you stiff and cold.'

'When I find,' said Ubare Khan, 'that my learned friend, Malo whose zeal for Islam had brought many under the Prophet's banner, has now met his Master in a "Hindu", why should I let my unsophisticated pride stand in my? I shall go, any how, and see for myself.'

So Ubare Khan went to Guru Nanak, who was then staying at a little distance from the village. On his way, he thought out many questions to test the Guru's powers and knowledge. He resolved to stand on his dignity, until he found in the Guru the qualities which could entitle him to his homage. But as soon as he saw the radiant face of the Guru, he forgot all his carefully thought out questions and all his resolves to keep his head erect. One look of the Master pierced to his heart and held it fast, as the angler's hook grips the fish in water. But there was no pain. Rather, a little elevation of the spirits accompanied his first experience. He went up to the Guru, and bowing a little, took his seat near him.

The Guru read Ubare Khan's mind like an open book. so he said to him. 'Well, friend, do not entangle yourself in the pride of power and creed. In himself neither a Hindu nor a Mohammadan can be less or more dear to God. So none can claim superiority on the mere ground of belonging to this or that creed. It is character, formed by and expressed in good, noble, selfless acts of love and service, that makes a man's progress towards God. All disputes about one's being superior to another are positively harmful, as they give food to the pride of heart. Think of Him, friend, and be ever engaged in adoring him. You will then cease to hate any body. A deep, all-embracing love will

then fill your whole being and inspire you to acts of help, service and sympathy; for you will see the light of God in all His creatures'

Ubare Khan found his Maste in the Guru. He bowed at his feet. A current as of electricity sent a thrill through his heart and soul. He rose a changed man, became a disciple of the Guru, vowed to pass his days in a life-long discipline in the Guru's academy of love, service, and devotion. His wife got the spark from him and became a slave of the Master, whom her eyes had not seen, but who came to dwell in her pure, faithful heart.

In that locality there also lived a haughty, powerful Muhammadan *Pir* named Abdul Rahman. Hearing that Ubare Khan had become a disciple of a 'Hindu', the *Pir* came to remonstrate with him. Ubare Khan, whom the love shafts of the Guru had pierced through and through, stood his ground well. He did not lose his temper at the unbecoming words used by the *Pir* about the Guru. He calmly advised the *Pir* to go and see the Master. The *Pir* thundered and threatened. 'I will drive him away,' said he and went his way.

One the following day, the Guru left the place which he had selected for his stay and walked towards the village, as he was drawn by the love of a dear disciple, and also because he felt an urge to go and slake the thirst of a restless soul. He had on his body a richly embroidered silk cloth, which Ubare Khan had humbly presented to him as an offering from his wife. Ubare Khan was with the Guru. *Pir* Abdul Rahman was seen approaching from the direction of the village. Ubare Khan remembered the *Pir*'s threat and became a bit afraid. The Guru looked at him and said, 'courage, friend. God, whose servants we are, is always at hand to guide and protect us.'

The *Pir* saw the Guru and Ubare Khan, 'Look at his rich robes,' thought he, 'and yet people are foolish enough to call him a hermit.' He deliberated for a while whether he should turn aside, pass by unconcerned, give the Guru a piece of his haughty Muhammadan mind, or accost him cordially, and have a talk with him to see if he had of the powers attributed to him by his disciples. Lost in these deliberations, he did not notice that the Guru had come quite close to him. As soon as he saw the Guru's God-lit countenance so near him, he forgot all his deliberations. He jumped down from his horse and saluted the Guru. But his next thought was, 'Should I put any questions or quietly depart?' The Guru divined his thoughts and spoke to him in words similar to those that he had addressed to Ubare Khan. At the end he added, 'Do not let yourself get entangled in outward appearances and conventional forms. True

renunciation has its seat at the heart, not on the outside of the body. This or any other dress makes no difference where the heart is free from any attachment for the goods and pleasures of this world. Rags and robes are equally acceptable to the servants of God.'

The *Pir* was conquered. In all humility, he bowed at the Guru's feet and begged for Light, Love, and Life. The Guru bade him rise and be blessed. The *Pir* entered the Holy Fellowship of adorers of the Beloved Bounteous Lord, and friends, brothers, and loving servants of mankind.

CHAPTER 50

RETURN TO THE ETERNAL HOME

Numerous other love-conquests were made by the Guru during his stay at Kartarpur. Of these we shall mention one more, as it has an important connection with the subsequent history of the Nation, founded by Guru Nanak.

Baba Lehina, born on March 31, 1504, was the son of Pheru, a petty trader living in the village of Matte-di-Sarai, in the present district of Ferozepur. The village having been sacked and ruined by Mughals and Balauchis, the family shifted to Harike and thence to Khadur, near Tarn Taran, district Amritsar. There, at the age of fifteen, he was married to mata Khivi of village Sanghar near Khadur.

Baba Lehina was devout worshipper of the goddess Durga. Being rich and strong and fervent in faith, and possessing the genius of a born leader of men, he was accepted by his fellow worshippers as their chief. Every year he used to lead a procession of Durga worshippers to Jawala Mukhi, a place sacred to the goddess in the lower Himalayas, where fire issues from the mountains. The flame coming out from the mountain there was regarded by the simple people to be a manifestation of Durga.

Ordinarily, he would light for himself, in his innermost room, a little lamp of kneaded flour fed with ghee. Its flame was to him a representation of his goddess of flame. He would sit watching it for hours in great devotion. Some time the spark which was in his soul would jump up in an attempt to mingle with the object of his worship. He would then dance round the flame in a rapture of zeal and joy.

Thus was Baba Lehina passing his days. Like the one who was to be his Master and was later to infuse his entire spirit into him, he, too, was waiting for the *Call*. The *Call* came at last through an unexpected medium.

Now there lived in Khadur a Sikh named Bhai Jodha. It was his daily practice to rise three hours before day-break and recite or sing the *Japji* and *Asa-di-war*. One fine morning, as Baba Lehina was going out for a bath after

his night long vigil before the flame, he heard Bhai Jodha singing to himself the Word of God as sung by Guru Nanak. The words of the Song struck a sympathetic chord in his heart. In mute adoration, he stood listening there. At its conclusion, he enquired from Bhai Jodha whose Song it was that he had been singing so fascinatingly. He was told, 'It is the Word of God brought down on earth for us by Guru Nanak, now dwelling at Kartarpur on the banks of Ravi.'

The name 'Guru Nanak' startled Baba Lehina. Some deepset, almost extinct, memory of a close kinship with the Guru was stirred into life. The very name of the Guru, uttered lovingly by one of his disciples, aroused in Baba Lehina thoughts and feelings which rendered him mute for a time. Devotion was kindled in his heart by what he heard about the Guru from Bhai Jodha. He then requested Bhai Jodha to teach him the charming Song. What greater joy could there be to a Sikh than that to be had in imparting the Guru's Word of God to others ? Baba Lehina learnt the Divine Song. He went about singing it all day long; for he found great pleasure in doing so.

Soon a strong desire grew in him for a sight of him whose Songs of the Lord had captivated his soul. In the year 1589 Bk/1532, when the time came for the annual pilgrimage to Jawalaa Mukhi, the temple of the Flame-goddess Durga, he persuaded his fellow worshippers to go by the way of Kartarpur. When the band of the pilgrims halted near the sacred village, Baba Lehina went on horseback to see the Guru. On the way, at a little distance from the village, he met with an old man who was making a round of his crop-covered fields. Baba Lehina enquired from him the way leading to the abode of Guru Nanak. The old man replied with a smile, 'Follow on, brother. I shall lead you to your destination.' The old man walked on in front, while Baba Lehina followed him on horseback. Near the main gate of the *Dharmsala* or the Gur's Temple of God, the old man requested the stranger to get down from the horse, tether it to peg, and enter the building. He would meet the Guru there/

Baba Lehina, securing the horse as suggested, entered the *Dharmsala*. He met a Sikh going about his duties in connection with the Guru's *Langar*. Baba Lehina was directed by him to the room where the Guru was to be found. He went as directed and entered. the sight threw him into confusion; for he found that the Guru was no other than the old man who had led him to that place. The thought that he had unwittingly shown disrespect to the Guru, by having ridden on horseback while the Guru was walking on foot in front,

pained and worried him. The Guru smiled and said, 'I only did my duty.' Baba Lehina could make no reply. The Guru seated the visitor near himself and enquired his name. 'My name is Lehina,' replied the visitor, 'I am a resident of Khadur.'

'Right, welcome you are,' said the Guru. 'You have come at last for your *lehina* that is due from me to you. I have been waiting for you.' The Guru then talked to him sweetly of God and of man's duty towards Him and His creatures. He was so impressed by the Guru's personality and the beauty of his teachings that he threw away the tinkling bells which he wore on his ankles and wrists to dance before the goddess; for he had no need of the goddess now. He let his companions go on their way, beating their cymbals and drums, and ringing their bells as usual. He had found his Master and His own Self in Guru Nanak, A touch of the Guru's feet, a look on his glorious God-lit countenance, and his soft sweet words of divine consolation, had revived in Baba Lehina far off, half forgotten memories of a close divine kinship with the Guru, and had filled him through and through with a joy that he had never known before.

The Guru then advised him to go and see his people at home. Baba Lehina obeyed. But after only a day's stay at Khadur he returned to Kartarpur where he had left his heart. He had seen how all Sikhs worked joyfully at the Guru's holy colony. He would make a beginning. So he took a heavy load of salt on his head and walked all the way to Kartarpur. He would not take a horse or a cooly to carry the dear load. When the old mother of the Sikhs, Mata Sulakhni, saw this richly dressed man, who was evidently unused to hard toil, bringing in a heavy load of salt from such a long distance, she was greatly affected and she treated and served him kindly, as a mother would do her darling, dutiful son.

Learning from her that the Guru was in the fields, engaged in his labour of love for his Sikhs, Baba Lehina took his way thither. He found that Guru and his Sikhs were weeding a paddy field. Baba Lehina made an obeisance to the Guru and began to do what others were doing. The work was sure to soil and stain his rich silk robes; but to him service was now dearer by far than any thing else. After a short time, the Guru asked him to give up weeding and take a bundle of weeds and grass to the cattle-shed. Baba Lehina obeyed.

1. The word *lehina* in Panjabi means 'debt due to one from another'.

Accordingly, a heavy load of wet, mud dripping grass was placed on his head. The wet mud falling from the grass stained his silk garments. But he has no thoughts to spare for his clothes. Mata Sulakhni saw him bringing in a second load that day and also saw his mud-stained garments of silk.

In the evening when the Guru returned from the fields, the old Mother of the Sikhs pointed towards Baba Lehina and said, 'Sire, what a strange welcome you have given to this rather delicate young man! He brought a heavy load of salt all the way from Khadur and then, a short while after, you placed on his head another equally heavy load of wet, dripping grass. See how his garments of silk have become stained with mud.'

'You are mistaken, good lady,' replied the Guru. 'He did not bear loads of salt and grass, but he bore the burden of suffering humanity. These are not mud stains; they are the sacred saffron spots which mark him out as the chosen one of the Lord. He has been annointed as the saviour of afflicted souls'

For over seven years, 1532-39 A.D., did Baba Lehina serve the Guru and his Sikhs at Kartarpur. His life became a practical lesson in Sikhism. By virtue of his unparalleled devotion, he soon won the Guru's heart. Unquestioning obedience and complete resignation to the Guru's will became the be-all and end-all of his life. His example has since been ever before the eyes of his Sikhs as the ideal to the attainment of which all their thoughts, feelings, and efforts should be dedicated. His faith and love were perfect and complete. Well, had he realized in his heart, and shown it in his actual life, that before expecting to be accepted by the Master, the Sikh has to place his body, mind, and soul, and all, at the service and disposal of the Guru and God. When later, he described in Divine Songs the essential qualities of the lovers and servants of Guru and God, he spoke from a heart and mind enriched with experience of that type of service and love. Here is what he sang :-

'What sort of love is that which permits one to be allured by another ?

He alone is a lover true who gets completely merged in the object of his love.

What sort of service is that in which the fear of the Master doth not depart ?

He alone deserves to be called a servant true who gets thoroughly absorbed in is love for his Master.'

It was with such a love that Baba Lehina loved Guru Nanak'. It was as such a 'servant true' that he rejoiced to obey the spoken and unspoken commandes of his beloved. In fact, so completely did he imbibe the Guru's spirit, so thoroughly was he imbued with the Guru's ideals, so fully did he

identity his will with the will of the Guru, that a simple nod or wink from the latter, which others could hardly perceive, was enough to despatch him speeding, most joyously, to tasks which others would have pronounced to be too hard, tedious, irksome, or repulsive, and even below their dignity.

In the meantime, Sikhs from all parts of the world which the Guru had visited in his early days came regularly to pay their love and homage to the old Father of his people. His name had become a household word in places far and near. As a sample of the faith, which people of all creeds had in him, we shall give below a simple incident of his last day on earth. It has been seen that several Muslim *Sufi Faqirs* had become devoted followers of the Guru. One of them was *Pir Baha-ul-Din* of Multan. The *Pir* was old. He felt his end drawing near. He had no fear of death; for the Guru had freed him of that fear long before. But another thought began to trouble him more and more. How would he bear to be away from the Master ? The thought of the impending separation made him miserable. He sent one of his followers, of whom there were thousands, to the Guru with the following prayer, 'O Good Master, I have loaded my load; I am about to start on my journey to the other world. The thought that thou wilt not be with me there is a constant torture to me. Kindly do something for me, so that I may have no cause for anxiety. How good would it be if I could go holding the end of thy garment.'

The Guru sent back a gracious reply, consoling the *Pir* and assuring him of a happy future. 'What fear should they have', said he, 'who have lived in constant communion with the Lord and have led a life of love, service, and devotion ? They do not die. Rather, they return to their real, eternal Home in the bosom of the Lord! So have no fears. I shall not long be away from you, for my life's journey in the world is done. I shall follow you in about six weeks.'

The *Pir* kissed the paper containing the Guru's message of love and hope. He bowed again in the direction of Kartarpur and blessed the bearer of the kindly message. Then he said to his followers, 'Forty days of separation will have to be borne still. How happy should I have been, if he had accompanied me and lighted my way to that home.'

The work which Guru Nanak had undertaken, the creation and organization of nation, could not be accomplished in a lifetime. It needed a succession of supreme leaders or Gurus. Hence Guru Nanak took great care in selecting his successor, and the practice continued till the tenth Guru sealed the succession to Guruship by bequeating it for ever to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

In order to effect the successor, Guru Nanak subjected his Sikhs and his sons to a series of tests. In all these Baba Lehina proved to be the worthiest. All others failed to come up to the requisite standard.

One day, in order to put his followers to an final test, the Guru assumed a terrible guise. He put on dirty, tattered clothes, held an open knife in his hand, took some hunting dogs with him, and proceeded into the forest, ostensibly in quest of game. Seeing him in this guise, several of his followers fled in error. As the party proceeded, they found the path covered with copper coins. Some Sikhs took up as many of them as they could carry and departed. The Guru proceeded on along with those who were left. Further on they found silver coins scattered in the road. Several Sikhs took up as many of the silver coins as they could carry and went back. As the party proceeded still further, they saw the road covered with gold coins. Several of the remaining Sikhs took up as many of them as they could carry and disappeared only two Sikhs besides Baba Lehina now remained with the Guru.

Proceeding further, the party found a funeral pyre. Beside it there lay a corpse, covered with a white sheet and emitting an offensive smell. The Guru, with wild eyes thundered. 'Whoever wishes to accompany let him eat of this corpse. The two remaining Sikhs quailed at the dreadful proposal and ran away. Baba Lehina alone remained staunch in his faith in the Guru. He knelt beside the corpse and asked the Guru whether he should eat the head or the feet of the corpse to begin with. He was told to begin at the waist. Baba Lehina lifted the winding sheet in order to begin to eat the corpse. The Guru stopped him saying, 'That's enough. I now know how many of my Sikhs have the strength to follow the path. Thou hast obtained my secret; thou art in mine image, produced, as it were, from my body or my *ang*. Thou art my *angad* and *Angad* is the name that thou henceforth shalt bear.' The Guru then embraced him, addressed him as Angad, the flesh of his flesh, the bone of his bone, and a part of his body, and declared that he had shown his fitness to be his successor.

Some time later the Guru decided to formally instal Sri Angad as the Guru. A special gathering of the faithful was summoned. Guru Nanak then performed the investiture ceremony as under :-

'He embraced Angad and whispered *Gurmantar* into his ear,

The book (*Pothi*) contained the Guru's own sacred compositions as well as the composition of the *Bhagats*, which he had collected during his travels.

Handing over to him the Book¹ and the rosary, he made him the Guru.
 He then patted him on the back and placed his hand on his head;
 Thus raising him to his own level, he seated him on the throne.
 Having ignited the light in Angad, he made it manifest to the world;
 Just as from one lamp another is ignited in the world.
 The whole congregation, the Guru's servants and disciples, then touched Guru
 Angad's feet.
 And he was hailed as the Guru by all.¹¹

To complete the ceremony, Guru Nanak placed five pice and a coconut before Guru Angad and said to Baba Buddha, 'This is my successor. Put a *Tilak* on his forehead in token of his appointment to the Guruship.' Baba Bhdha did as desired. The Guru then bowed before him and ordered his followers to obey and serve Baba Angad, who was in his image, his very self in light and spirit.

Guru Nanak's sons were highly displeased at being 'superseded' by one whom they regarded as a menial servant of the family. But the Guru told them that the choice had been made after thoroughgoing tests in which they had failed to come up to the mark. He added, 'The Guruship is a position which depends on self-sacrifice. Angad has exhibited that virtue in the highest degree. Consequently, he has the best claim to the position to which he has been elevated' This happened on the 17th of Asarh, 1596 Bk/June 4, 1539 A.D. After that the Guru sent Baba Angad to Khadur. He obeyed, though he longed to remain in attendance on the Guru to the end.

About three months later, the time arrived for the Guru's departure for the world of mortals and his return to the eternal Home. He made ready to go. He laid himself on a neat, cosy bed. He was about to meet his Lord. The Bride was to return unto the bosom of the Spouse. To the disciples who had assembled around him, he said :-

'The appointed hour has come-
 The hour of marriage and union with the Spouse Divine.
 Assemble ye, my comrades;
 Cluster round me and lift up you merry notes :
 Sing the praises of the divine, comforting Lord.
 Anoint the Bride.

1. From a manuscript by Shri Keso Das Kushal, containing an account of the first five Gurus' lives, in possession of the Manager, Sri Patna Sahib.

Pour oil on her forehead,
 Give her your blessings,
 And pray that she may meet her Lord,
 And be happy with him for aye.
 Sing ye, my friends, the praises of the Spouse;
 For the appointed hour of union has come.'

Thus singing the Word of God to the last moment of his life on this earth, and about three months after he had installed Guru Angad as his successor, Guru Nanak returned to the Lord whence he had come in response to the call of afflicted humanity. This happened on the tenth day of the dark half of Assu, Sambat 1596 Bk. or Assu 7, 1596 Bk/ September 22, 1539 A.D. Great was the grief which filled the hearts of his devoted disciples. Guru Angad's grief was the deepest. The first shock of separation from the Master was so severe that Guru Angad cried aloud in love's deep despair :-

Better by far to die
 Before the dear one the object of our love, doth so.
 What use is life in the world
 After the dear one is gone for ever ?'

Sri Rag ki Var Slok.

But Guru Nanak's last injunctions restrained them from giving themselves up to despair and gloom.

In all extant biographies of the Guru it is recorded that a short time before the Guru's Spirit had left his body, a dispute arose between his followers regarding the disposal of his earthly remains. The Sikhs drawn from the Muhammadan community wanted to bury his body, whereas those drawn from the Hindu community wanted to cremate it. As the dispute was growing warm, one of the Sikhs suggested that the best thing was to get the matter decided by a reference to the Guru himself. When the Guru was approached, he said, 'Let each side to the dispute place some fresh flowers, one on my right and the other on my left. They whose flowers remain fresh till morning shall have the right to dispose of my body as they please.' This was done. After the flowers had been placed on each side of the Guru, as he lay on his bed, he drew his sheet over himself and the flowers. Next morning when the sheet was removed, the Guru's body was not to be found there, Secret powers of Nature had dissolved

it into its constituent elements.¹ The flowers of both the parties had remained fresh as ever. So both could lay equal claims to the Guru. One party buried their flowers and the other cremated theirs. On the spots they erected two buildings in memory of the Guru. Both have since been washed away by the river, 'perhaps providentially, so as to avoid idolatrous worship of the Guru's last resting place'. Some time after that another shrine was built there by a devoted Sikh. This exists up to these days. It is now in Pakistan. Still later, one of the great-grandsons of the Guru erected another shrine on the left bank of the river and called it Dehra Baba Nanak (District Gurdaspur).

Thus, after a sojourn of seventy years, five months, and three days, this Minstrel of God, this divinely gifted guide and loving friend of mankind, returned to his eternal Home in the bosom of his Father. The godly gifts of unbounded love, life, and adoration, of world-wide human sympathy, of faith, joy, and hope without measure, of the Word of God that flowed into his heart and soul at all hours and that raises men to the level of God to be one with Him for ever, of Song of the Lord which charmed human souls out of decay, woe, and suffering and made them partakers of infinite joy and everlasting Life—all these he breathed into the heart and soul of his successor, Guru Angad. Guru Nanak had declared again and again that his own Guru or teacher was the Infinite, Absolute, All-pervading Lord Himself. Now, as he became one with his Teacher after a life of toil and loving, selfless devotion to the cause of humanity, Baba Laihna, with his own efforts and the grace of God and Guru, became one with his own teacher, Guru Nanak, nay became Guru Nanak himself. He was to be the second Guru Nanak. On him now devolved the sweet arduous task of conveying the message of the Lord to all, of weaning men from their Godless habits of body, mind, and soul, of awakening them to a life of the spirit, of making all men adorers of God and loving servants of their fellowmen. It was now his turn to nourish and protect the seedling planted by Guru Nanak, and, in due course, to pass on that duty to another like himself.

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1. Those who have conducted researches into spiritual and psychical phenomena—some of the world's best scientists having been among them—have found and certified that, among many other wonderful, inexplicable by the known laws of Nature, and hence apparently supernatural phenomena which they have witnessed again and again under the strictest vigilance and caution has been the passing of flowers, harmoniums and other things through locked and sealed doors. Something of the same sort must have happened with the Guru's earthly remains. Readers who are interested in the subject are invited to read Appendix II and follow up with the study of books suggested there.

CHAPTER 51

RECAPITULATION

Let us now look back and take a general view of the work which had awaited Guru Nanak when, in response to the call of suffering, afflicted humanity, the Bounteous Lord sent him forth into the world. We shall afterward try to appreciate what he did toward the performance of that work. In the first two chapters of this book an attempt has been made to picture the times in which Guru Nanak had to live and work. We have seen how ugly were the times and how wretched was the plight of the Indian people. Cries of woe and anguish rose from innumerable hearts. In fact, whole humanity was crying for a saviour.

The call of humanity was not a simple one. It was composed of innumerable troubled voices that rose from the heart of man. It reached him in the form of a confused murmur that sprang from human depths and that, comprising in it all tears, all torments, all afflictions that weighed on human hearts, became for him the sigh of creation, the sad, still music of humanity, the supreme call that urged him to do his duty toward man and God.

First of all, there was the cry of the subject against their rulers. The government of the people was by the few and for the few who had managed to capture power. The interests of the weak and the poor, the bulk of India's population, were entirely neglected. The Muhammadan occupation of the land and its attendant conversion at the point of sword had forced on the people a foreign rule and a foreign culture. The people were subjected to untold miseries arising from a misrule that verged on anarchy. Neither life, nor property, nor honour was safe from the wrath, greed, and lust of the rulers. Then there were the natural leaders of the people, the landed and propertied classes, who had thrown in their lot with the foreign oppressors and were ever officiously ready to demonstrate their loyalty by active help in suppressing any signs of public dissatisfaction. They thrived on the people's blood. The subjects, Hindus as well as Muhammadans, were being crushed under the heel of power, Guru Nanak describes the state of affairs in the following words :-

'The kings have become butchers misrule, tyranny, and violence are the knives in their bloody hands.

In the mad confusion thus caused by the crime of kings, righteousness has taken wings and flown from the land as do birds from a tree on fire.

Sin and falsehood darken the face of the earth.

In the deep, thick darkness as impossible it is to get a glimpse of virtue and truth as to see the moon on a gloomy, moonless night. The kings are tigers and their officials are dogs.

Var Majh.

On account of all this, there rose from the hearts of the oppressed, down-trodden people a bitter, woeful, anguished cry against the prevalent tyranny and anarchy—a cry for a saviour to come, and on the one hand, to reform the rulers and wake them to a sense of their duties and obligations, and on the other to revitalize the people into a consciousness of their rights and powers, to make the rulers and the ruled regard each other as brothers born of the same father, each set, in his own sphere, to further the progress of humanity towards its destined goal.

There was then the call of the laity against the class of men who had constituted themselves the custodians and dispensers of religious knowledge and were, by withholding from the people the food of the spirit, starving their souls. Cant and superstition had taken the place of piety and devotion. The priests themselves were hypocrites, who neither believed nor practised what they professed. Guru Nanak speaks of them in the following words :-

'Those who ply the dagger as butchers of men wear the sacred thread round their necks ...

Falsehood is their capital and lies do form their trade;

They support themselves by telling lies;

Righteousness and honour are far indeed from their lives.

Falsehood prevails all round, O Nanak,

They have the sacred marks on their foreheads,

And wear the prescribed loin-cloth formally tucked in behind;

They pose as men of religion.

But they are butchers of the world with bloody knives in their hands.'

Asa di Var.

So, the second component of the mixed cry of humanity was this anguished wail of a people's soul for a way to be shown in the utter confusion and deep gloom created all round by irreligion arrogantly masquerading as religion.

There were also the pseudo-religious people like *Yogis*, *Bairagis*, ascetics of various types, who had renounced useful activity, and lived, on the honest earnings of the laity, lives of slothful ease, and in many cases even of vice and luxury. They were not only oppressing the people in order to enforce their manifold exactions, but were also leading them astray by preaching that the highest bliss could not be attained by men leading lives of service and useful toil.

There were also the religious heads of the Muhammadans who had come to be feeders of the flames of religions of religious bigotry, fanaticism, and persecution. Their lives, too, were so ugly that Guru Nanak speaks of them as "eaters of men who fail not to say the prescribed Muhammadan prayers". There were also several religious orders among the Muhammadans who lived as social parasites and were a source of great trouble to people engaged in honest trades. Among Hindus and Mahammadans alike, almost all who posed as men of religion were spiritually dead and were killing the people's souls.

Then there was the cry of the Hindus against their Muhammadan persecutors. The Word of God as proclaimed by the Prophet of Arabia was cited to advocate and applaud wanton acts of inhuman cruelty against the unbelievers. The latter were being mercilessly butchered; their temples were being desecrated and demolished; their libraries of ancient books were being destroyed and burnt; their women and children were made slaves and helpless victims of the lust and luxury of their Muhammadan Masters; their lives were, in fact, bereft of everything that makes life worth living; they were scorned, maltreated, and trodden under foot, and their life, honour, and property were regarded as being at the mercy and pleasure of their powerful Muhammadan rulers and neighbours.

Then there was the cry of the low-caste and out-caste Hindus against their high-caste co-religionists. These wretched people were Hindus only in name, and dearly, indeed, had they to pay and suffer for the 'Privilege' of

calling themselves the co-religionists of the redoubtable Brahmins. They could not study, hear, or possess the Hindus Scriptures.¹ They could not even approach, much less enter the Hindus temples. They could not worship the Hindu gods and goddesses. The *Shudras* had to do all sorts of menial, and even mean and degrading, duties for the comfort of the high born Hindus, and for this very service, they were considered to be worse than dogs and treaded as untouchables.

Then there was the cry of the Hindu women against their being treated virtually as *Shudras*, in so far as they were denied the right to take part in religious rites and were forbidden to have any concern with the sacred texts.²

There were, besides, numerous other troubled voices and piteous groans which rose from the depths of human hearts in every place. There was the cry of the poor, toiling, and starving millions against their masters and exploiters who fattened themselves on the life-blood of their weak and helpless neighbours. There was also the cry of the toilers and producers of the country's wealth against all types of able-bodied parasites and sluggards who shrank from toil and labour, but still, by force, law, or device, under one sort of pretence or another, managed to take away the lion's share of the fruits of the people's labour. There was the cry of the exploited, down-trodden individuals against the organised loot of the weak by the strong which society sanctioned and maintained. Above all, there was the cry of the human soul against all these sources of human cries; for they had all combined to choke and crush it under the debris of unholy desires and passions.

These were some of the cries which rose from the heart of man to the feet of the Father and in response to which He sent forth Guru Nanak into the

1. 'It is laid down in the twelfth chapter of the *Institutes of Gautam* that if a *Shudar* even hear the *Veds*, his ears must be stopped either with molten lead or wax; if he read the *Veds*, his tongue must be cut out; and if he possess the *Veds*, his body must be cut in twain.'

Macauliffe, I, li. f.n.

2. 'In the eighteenth *Slok* of the ninth chapter of the *Institutes of Manu* it is laid down that woman may not take part in any Vedic rites. Their doing so, or having any concern with Vedic texts, would be contrary to *dharma*. Women were, therefore, deemed as *Shudars*, and beyond the pale of religion.'

Ibid.

world. These were the cries which forced the Guru to quit his restful life in the seclusion of his village. We know that he could have, if he had so liked, spent in his village a life of ease and comfort or that of peace and religious devotion. But that was neither in his power nor in his nature to do. The Lord who sat enthroned in his heart, whom he found pervading every nook and corner of the world, would not permit him to sit idle. The cry of humanity which penetrated to his heart would not let him live in peace and plenty, when millions around him were suffering pangs of physical and spiritual starvation. He would go out to them and distribute among them, according to their need and capacity, the bread of God which he alone could share with all.

Guru Nanak had heard these cries since his childhood. Night and day, the call of humanity would quietly steal into his heart and soul and, gathering force and volume, grow into a loud lament as that of a child left all alone and lost in a vast, limitless wilderness. It made him sad to think what man had made of man, but it also filled him with an irresistible longing to be up and doing. Hence, it had thrown him into mighty qualms for days at a stretch, making him forsake food, sport, and sleep. But conscious of the supreme magnitude of the task, he had, as it were, muzzled his godly, fractious heart in order to wait for his Lord's signal, before he would respond to the incessant call. He had to gather within himself, till he was full to overflowing, divine Light, life, joy, hope, and love, as they quietly flowed into his heart, mind, and spirit from the Supreme source of good, beauty, and truth. It was for these that humanity cried. It was, therefore, of these that he had to make himself an inexhaustible reservoir before setting out to slake the thirst of mankind.

Each time that he heard to call, he looked within and above him to see if the time for response had come; he was waiting for the call both from within and above. He would go forth when bidden by God who dwelt in and around him on every side. That call came at last. He made an immediate response. Distributing to the poor almost all that he had of the world's goods, and donning an ascetic's dress, he started on his huge campaign to reform the world and end the pain. Taking orders from his Master, he became his strolling minstrel, singing to all men, in all lands, of His Grace and glory, of Love, Truth and service, of the duty of all towards each and each towards all. He gave up his family so that he might become a friend and brother of all

mankind. The whole human race was thenceforth his family. He wandered through distant lands, so that he might rescue humanity from limitless wandering in the whirlpool of transmigration; he took upon himself the toils and risks of long journeys through the unsafest wayfarers in the life's journey; he embraced a life of poverty and privation, so that he might make the rich and the poor of this earth the rightful heirs of divine, immeasurable riches of the Love of good and man. In all places that he visited, he met the oppressor as well the oppressed, the tyrants and their helpless victims, the rulers and the ruled, the wicked and the meek. He met them all, and with the radiant flame of love and devotion, lighted up their dark hearts and souls, and burnt away all dross which filled and polluted them. He aroused in the hearts of all a sense of the presence of God in their midst; of His unbounded love for all; of the dignity of human life; and of the duties of man towards God, his neighbours, and his own self, both body and soul. He carried to all men his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. He spoke to all in their own respective languages, and made them partakers of the bliss and calm which filled him through and through. In all places he founded his Holy fellowship, the "fraternity of God fearing republicans", in which all were equal in all respects. All distinctions, based on birth and position in society, were removed.¹ He proclaimed to all the great truth that man's progress in this life as well as in the life to come depends on his own thoughts, feelings, acts, and efforts, in this world.

Thus it was that Guru Nanak performed his heaven ordained, self-chosen task. Thus it was that he responded to the call of humanity and God, and touring through distant lands, met and reformed kings, magnates, *Yogis*, *Pandits*, monsters, *Pirs*, *Faqirs*, and *Mullas*; exalted the lowly; revitalized to the world how a man of religion should live in the world and yet be above it. He liberated the human soul from the choking, crushing burden of unholy passion and desires. and set it to fly godwards on the wings of the Word of God.

1. For a detailed study of what the Sikh Gurus did towards removing caste restrictions and banishing untouchability, read the writer's *Sikh Gurus and Untouchability*. For a more detailed study of this topic the reader is invited to study the writer's *Guru Nanak's Response to the Call of Humanity*.

CHAPTER 52

GLIMPSES OF GURU NANAK'S PERSON

We have seen Guru Nanak at his heaven-ordained task of revitalizing the dead and dying spirit of humanity, whom he found burning in the fire of hate, despair, and unbelief; of soothing with his words and acts of love and sympathy, the fluttering hearts of a troubled world; of arousing people to a sense of their divine origin and ideal, and filling them with a deep, unshakable faith in God, and a firm, active confidence in themselves; of conveying to mankind his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man; of initiating people to a life of Love, service, and worship; of founding a Holy Fellowship, a 'Fraternity of God fearing Republicans'; of rescuing all whom he found lost in the wilderness of sin and error, and leading them, with the help of his ever-bright torch of Love and Truth, to the Blissful State where all sorrows cease, all flutterings of fear-laden hearts subside, where a steady, abiding joy and lasting peace come to fill the soul to its utmost depths, and where the happy soul ever feeds on the sight of the Lord and rejoices in obeying His Will. Let us now try to picture him as he must have appeared to the fortunate people who had the privilege to see him with their eyes of flesh. Let us try to comprehend, of course in our limited way, the charms of his person which subdued kings, bigots, tyrants, cannibals, robbers, fanatics, scholars, ascetics, theologians, and all else on whom he fixed his gaze of love.

Satguru or True Word Teacher

First and foremost he was a divinely anointed Master, come to tell the world of the heavenly Father and to lead them all to His blissful Door. He ever dwelt in God, God ever dwelt in him, and he showed Him to all who had the heart to desire and deserve. He gave people a relish of the life of the spirit, and, shaking them out of their mundane, soul-killing desires, passions, and pursuits, set them on the path leading to life everlasting. He was not to toil for a sect or section. He was for the whole world. Bhai Gurdas says that, on receiving orders from above, Guru Nanak set forth to

correct and reform the whole race of man. Born in the Panjab, at a time when travelling had to be done mostly on foot and was fraught with great risks from wild beasts, pests, and, robbers, he made extensive tours not only in all parts of India but also to such distant places as China, Burma, Ceylon, Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Russian Turkistan, Baghdad, and Afghanistan. He conveyed his message of Love, service, and worship to all climes and people. Everywhere he succeeded in lighting the holy flame in the hearts of the people. Kings and *Faqirs*, robbers and saints, *Sufis* and *Yogis*, all bowed before him, and each claimed him as his own. When he left them, they carved for themselves his image in the shrines of their devoted heart, and adored him with a true and steadfast love and devotion. They were helped in this worship of love by the Word of God which the Guru ever left with his disciples. They repeated his heavenly Songs of the Lord, and daily and hourly held communion with him and with God. He knit the souls of his disciples to the feet of the Lord. He delivered his message to all people in the language of their land and made them all member of his Holy Fellowship in which all were equal before God and man. His message was for humanity at large.

Guru Nanak is the *Satguru* or the True World Teacher in another sense too. His teachings are not for a particular age. None of his thoughts or sayings can ever become obsolete. In his Songs and Discourses of the Lord there is nothing which has so far been denied or contradicted by the latest discoveries of scientific thought, or that can likely be ever questioned. On the other hand, the progress of science in all its fields is only helping us to understand all the better some passages in his writings, which erstwhile seemed a bit obscure. He was a *Satguru* because he was the voice of God; he said what the Lord bade him utter. He declared in unequivocal words that his teacher was the Infinite, Absolute Lord Himself and that all that he said was in obedience to the orders received from Him. How could such sayings be meant for a particular age, land, or people ? It is on that account that a popular song describes him thus, 'Guru Nanak belongs to all ; everybody doth love and adore him.'

Prophet and Philosopher

In the person of Guru Nanak we meet with an unparalleled completeness of religious life. A little thought will tell us that religious life has two elements

which are seldom found combined to a great extent in the same person. They seem to be mutually incompatible. 'There is the ecstatic, fervid type which appears in the prophet who is appallingly aware, with a vividness that is nearly always painful, of the presence of God and of His purity and holiness'¹ He finds himself face to face and in intimate contact with God. The world of sense disappears for him and he finds God whispering into his heart what he shall say and how he shall act. Then there is the philosophic type, with the quiet and clam of a firmly established faith. In this the man is full of confidence and strength. He has placed his trust in the Almighty and is content to leave every issue in His hands. He trusts in God and does the right. Though these elements seem to be incompatible, yet they must both be present in some degree. It is essential for all truly religious life that man should feel full responsibility before God for all his thoughts, feelings, and acts. But it is equally essential that he should be conscious of his impotence before the Almighty, of his life being completely in His hands.

When we look at the person of Guru Nanak, we find that in him these two incompatibles are completely reconciled and united. If we read his sublime poetry of Nature and Man, we find how calm and observant he was of all that was passing around him in the animate and the inanimate world. He observes with rapture, the dark clouds swarming thick in the rainy season; imagines the ongings and the expectant joy of the whole vegetable and animal world at such a time; listens to the voice of the *sarang*, crying aloud for its drop of the rain-water; watches the sun, the moon, the starry heavens, and the panorama of the whole universe, dancing before the Throne of God. He realizes the pangs that a deserted wife feels in thinking of her spouse; he watches the birds as they fly across the heavens, the fish as they swim in water or writhe in agony when dragged out of it, the heron as it stand, like an anchorite, one-legged on the edge of a pool of water, apparently lost in thought or sleep, but in reality fully alert and on the lookout for a tiny frog. His eye, ear, and heart are ever open to every impression of life around him. In all that he sees or feels, he finds the hand and the will of his wills. All act as He directs. None is outside the ambit of His Will. All this is a proof of his intense calm and absolute certainty. But there is the other side,

1. Willian Temple, *The Faith and Modern Thought*, pp. 85-86.

too. We find him, on several occasions, becoming apparently lost to the world, diving deep into the ocean of ecstasy, and becoming almost incapacitated for physical exertion. He becomes beside himself. People consider him to be mad or possessed. Some, like Babar, unacquainted with this type of religious experience, take him for dead. But in reality he is, at such moments, in direct union and active communion with God. When he comes to himself, we find him clamer, steadier, and more energetic than ever, in the execution of his heaven-ordained task.

Thus we find that in the person of Guru Nanak the two types of religious experience were fully developed and intimately blended. It was on that account that he could vanquish *Yogis, Faqirs, Mullas, and Pandits*. He was more than a match for them in philosophic thought and argument, and had the unique power of communicating to them his religious faith and fervour. They were proud of their learning and religious practices. They were thickening the wall of egoism between themselves and their indwelling Maker and Sustainer. The Divine Guest was within, but they looked for Him elsewhere, or perhaps, they forgot to look for Him anywhere at all. They did not think of preparing the chamber of their hearts for His reception. Guru Nanak threw a light on their inner selves, convinced them of their error, and showed them the Lord enthroned in and above all his creation, including themselves. He taught them to worship Him through Love, service, and adoration. In that way they could meet and be one with Him.

Guru Nanak was thus a philosopher and prophet in one. His soul soared to celestial heights and brought from there arm-loads of ambrosia, the divine food of gods. This he distributed to all without distinction. He dived deep into the ocean of ecstasy and then distributed to all, according to their need and capacity, the pearls of eternal joy, peace and devotion, which he brought from there. He was a unique prophet who could quite effectively do what has baffled all other prophets the world over. He could explain his intense religious experience in philosophic thought and communicate it to others. He was a philosopher, but unlike all others; for he did not have to painfully argue up to God, be convinced of His existence, but be altogether incapable of finding and realizing Him. It has been said that all philosophy culminates with the divine : only religious experience can give us God, and men who have the most vital communion with God are generally the least able to communicate their experience in the language of science or philosophy. But Guru Nanak's

philosophy was the hand maiden of his prophetic vision and experience, both were fast, inseparable friends, ever at the beck and call of each other.

Yogi and Householder

There is yet another aspect of his person in which we find an intimate union of two extremes which are generally regarded as wholly incompatible. The Guru was a perfect Yogi and an ideal householder. For the whole of his life he toiled for the good of others. To sow, as widely as possible, the seed of Name was the ideal which he kept ever in view. He renounced his home and family because humanity called him to be its friend and saviour. He made a ready response. He distributed to the poor all that he had of the world's wealth and then started forth to give himself, his own self and spirit, to the whole human race. Like a Yogi he dwelt ever in union with the divine; renounced all attachments of the world; was ever evenly balanced amid all vicissitudes of life; never shrank from risks or sufferings; death had no terrors for him; he took upon himself the woes and sufferings of others; and, with an eye ever on the welfare of the world, he performed righteous action like a true Yogi. So strong was the urge in him for exertion in that direction that for over a quarter of a century he was ever on the wing, visiting different people and awakening them to a like of the spirit. This was yoga in its most perfect form.

But his renunciation was not a forced one. He had not, as it were, to wrench himself away from his home and family; and then to subdue, by self-torture, his heart's leanings and longings for the world. His renunciation sprang from his soul, and his whole being made a ready response. There was no compulsion, no violence. This was his *Sahaj Yoga*, renunciation which had its spring in the equipoised heart and soul. In him there was a complete renunciation of even renunciation itself. He never thought of parading his having renounced the world. Moreover, when he was satisfied that his duty as a 'strolling Yogi' was done, he again returned to his home and family. He began to live as a 'householder Yogi'. He had been preaching to the people that one should remain in the world, amid home and family, and yet ever maintain an attitude of constant detachment. He showed now how that ideal was to be practised. In the language of the world he was the father of two sons. But in himself he was the father of his people of all lands and climes. He toiled and laboured for them all. He provided for their physical needs. He looked to their

spiritual requirements. He fed, clothed, and nourished their bodies, minds, and souls. All who came to his door received what they needed. Such is the ideal that he prescribed for his Sikhs after demonstrating its practice in his own life.

Reformer

He was a gifted, far-sighted reformer. He correctly diagnosed the malady which was eating into the vitals of human society, selected the right remedy, and applied it with zeal, energy, and perseverance. The reforms that he advocated and initiated remain to this day the ideal of many advanced nations of the world. His solution of the social, political and economic problems of human society stands justified even in the light of modern theories in Economics, Sociology, and Politics. The organization of society which he aimed at has been suitably described by Pincott as a "Fraternity of God-fearing Republicans". All are to live as equals. None is to assume airs of superiority on the score of birth, creed, sex, or class. All should look to the good and welfare of each, and each should contribute his best towards the good and prosperity of all. No class-wars, no exploitation, no strikes, no lockouts, no oppression or misrule, no foreign domination, would disfigure such a society. But, at the same time, it is not to be a group of atheists who have no hopes or fears beyond this life, for they believe in no other. God is to be a living reality for them; His fear is to check the evil propensities of their nature; His love is to inspire them to acts of service and usefulness. Self-effacement is to be practised in order to help the soul's progress towards a full realization of its unlimited powers. It is the lower self that has to be conquered and subdued in order to liberate the higher self for a flight to the bosom of the Lord. The hope of the joy of that union is to inspire each and all. There will then be no despots, no autocrats, no rulers of men; but humble, loving servants carrying on their duties, whatever they be, with the sole object of striving for the good and welfare of the human race and in the hope that this performance of their duties in the right spirit will help them in the progress of their own souls. No nation will then try to conquer and govern another; no individual will try to impose his will on his fellowmen. All would live as equals, helping each other towards the attainment of life's ideal. The colony of disciples which he founded at Kartarpur was to be the model. We know that all, including even the Guru and

his wife, engaged themselves in one form of labour or other in order to produce and supply the necessities of physical life. None considered himself to be a privileged one who could sit and muse and still claim a share in the wealth of the colony. All had to work for each, each had to toil for all. The Guru himself, the old father of his people, aged above sixty by then, set the example by working at the plough, or at any other operation going on in the fields. No distinction of caste, race, or creed was observed in the field, in the temple, or in the common kitchen. All were brothers and equals. Such is the ideal organization which Guru Nanak designed for human society

Poet

Guru Nanak was a born poet. We find him at the tender age on nine or ten confounding his teachers with his poetic utterances. That gift, which he had from God, remained with him in full bloom to the end of his mission on this earth. In its power of appeal to the human heart, in its power to sway the whole being of man, to allay his fears, to soothe his pains, and to inspire in him faith, longing, hope, and confidence; in its width of outlook and sympathy; in its power to call up images of things, visible and invisible, Guru Nanak's poetry remains without a parallel. He was a poet of man, Nature and God. The thought of the one led him on to the others. So he sang of them all in one breath. His pictures of scenes from Nature, drawn with a wonderful economy in the use of words, find their way direct to the core of human mind and heart. But he does not allow us to remain for long engrossed in the object of sense. With little strokes he lifts us up from Nature to its Lord, bids us look up and down, in and out, and enjoy the blissful contemplation. He makes us see our duty to our fellow-beings and sends us speeding along on our different paths of love and service.

Musician

Guru Nanak was also a musician. In fact, he called himself, again and again, the Minstrel of God sent forth into the world for the purpose of singing to man the praises of the Lord and leading him to his ever-open arms. There was an irresistible power in his music. It charmed and tamed wild, ferocious beasts, subdued raging kings and raving bigots and tyrants; cooled the fires in the breasts of the proud and haughty, and made *thugs* and robbers forget their trade and hug his feet. Just recall how many were won for ever by his Songs. It was, in fact, his songs of the Lord that made him truly the

voice of God. Up to this day they are the wings on which the souls of his disciples fly Godwards. Whether when assembled in congregation or going about their duties in peace and war, the disciples of Guru Nanak sing his Songs, feed their spirit on them, and, invoking the spirit of their Master, seek to attain to that condition of blissful poise where all yearnings cease, but healthy, useful activity regains fresh vigour and strength.

Patriot.

Guru Nanak was a true patriot, Indeed he was the first or almost the first in India to be inspired with that lofty sentiment. The sight and thought of his country's woes made his heart bleed. He was sore distressed at the tyranny and oppression which darkened the fair face of India. He sang of the people's ills, of his country's wrongs, of the crimes of kings who had become butchers of their people, he lifted his voice to the bosom of the Lord and Father of both the rulers and the ruled, He appealed to the dormant spiritual faculty of all and made them realize their rights and duties as human beings. All long in his life he made it a rule to meet and reform all who misused their position and power. He called upon his countryman to be up and doing in the cause of their country's freedom, to purify and nerve themselves up in order to be worth champions of their country's cause. For preaching his doctrines of liberty, equality, and fraternity, for his untiring efforts to establish an association of God-fearing Republicans, he was arrested by the agents of Sikandar Lodhi, Emperor of Delhi. His teachings were considered to be dangerous for the despotic rule of the 'Ferocious Bigot'. But his arrest or subsequent experiences did not daunt him in the least. He met the Emperor, delivered to him his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, woke him to a realization of his duties towards his subjects, and obtained from him a promise to be a just and merciful ruler.

Finding what havoc the victorious armies of Barbar were working in the land, Guru Nanak's patriotic heart sent forth a bitter complaint to the Lord against His seeming partiality. Thus sang he :

'Today Khurasan You have made Thine own.

Why not India, O Lord ?

Why have You breathed a dreadful curse on this land and terrified it with Your retribution ?

You will not let Yourself look responsible for our ills;
 Hence You have sent us ruin and death in a Mughal's guise;
 But why O Lord why ?...

The whole of this moving Song and many others which he sang *extempore* on seeing the misery of his countrymen and countrywomen, are the sublimest pieces of patriotic poetry that has ever been written. The patriotic part played by the Guru at the time of Babar's invasion has been noticed in the body of the book. Not only did he voluntarily share the sufferings of his compatriots, but he also interceded successfully on behalf of those of his country's sons and daughters who had been taken prisoners by the victorious invaders, reformed the dreaded Mughal, and made him one of the kindest rulers.

We can well imagine what he would have done if he had a nation or an army at his back. But the time was not yet ripe for making an armed effort towards the political and economic emancipation of his country. There was no nation in existence that could be roused to action against the tyrants. That nation had to be created. He did the best that was possible under the circumstances. He began to arouse in the down-trodden people a longing for union, liberty, and equality. In order that they might be ready to win their rights in due course and to make the requisite sacrifices for that covered consummation, he sought to raise and purify their character, produce in them a strong sense of honour and self-respect. He knew that no people with a lofty character, ready for any sacrifice, and inspired with a longing to be united and free could be held in chains and subjection for long. Knowing that to mould the character of those who had fallen so low in the course of centuries of despotic rule of foreigners, it was essential to proclaim the message and hold up the ideal for some generations at least, he ordained a succession of Gurus till the work could be entrusted to the people themselves.

Cosmopolitan

But the love for his land, deep and genuine as it was, did not exhaust or bound his spacious heart. As a matter of fact, his patriotism sprang from the supreme love of humanity which filled his heart, through and through. He was a citizen of the world. Finding how the people in all lands were groaning under the ills, wrought by their fellowmen in power, he girded up his loins to carry, as far as he could, his message of Love, service, and worship, of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, Everywhere he taught all sections of the

people to live and love as brother. Just think of the countries which he visited—Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, China, Russia, Turkistan, Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Iraq, Sudan and Persia, besides the whole of India. He might have gone farther for aught we know. His heart was wide as humanity. His love embraced all living beings. For him love of his own country and countrymen did not, as a necessary corollary, involve hatred of other lands and peoples. He wanted all peoples to grow up together in deep love of God and man, and all work to bring the Kingdom of God on this earth.

His Path of Love

He realized full well that the path of love to which he invited all people was not to be chosen light-heartedly. It was narrower than a hair and sharper than the sharpest steel. It involved great risks and difficulties, steady exertion and ceaseless endeavour, eternal vigilance and unshrinking devotion. Hence it was that, after arousing in the hearts of his listeners a desire to set forth on the path of love which he smilingly pointed out to them as leading to the achievement of the goal and purpose of human life, and helping men to approach the bosom of the Lord, Guru Nanak always warned the enthusiasts and bade them pause and ponder over the demands and magnitude of the undertaking. He told them :

‘Desirest you this game of Love to play?

Put your head on your palm,

With a heart resolute and calm.

Steaditly follow me on this way.

This path of love if you would tread,

Be ready, O dear,

Sans wavering or fear.

In perfect joy, to lay down your head’

History stands witness to the fact how marvellously the Sikhs of Guru Nanak imbibed, in due course, the spirit of his teachings.¹

Brave and Fearless

Guru Nanak was fearless and brave. Having chosen his path and undertaken his heaven-Ordained task, he shrank from no toil or risk which he had to encounter in the execution of his duty. If his duty called him to the snows of

1. Vide *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, by the writer.

the Himalayas or the sands of Arabia and Egypt, to the palaces of kings or the huts of castaway beggars, to the camps of dreaded autocrats, bigots, and tyrants, or the ambushes of robbers and cannibals and slave dealers, he paused not even for a moment to consider the possible consequences of his adventures. He did his duty and joyfully bore on his person all toils and hardships that it entailed. He carried his life on his plam. He was not afraid of death. Rather, he banished the fear of death from the hearts of his disciples. 'To die', said he, 'is the privilege of the brave, provided they die in an approved cause.' What fear could they feel who regarded death as privilege ?

Think of the times in which he lived and worked. On the throne of Delhi was that 'ferocious bigot' who beheaded learned persons like *Pandit* Boodhan for the mere offence of maintaining that any other religion could be quite as good as Islam. On the other hand, the Brahmins had so greatly tightened the caste restriction that even the slightest departure was punished with ex-communication. Guru Nanak knew that manifold risks which he ran in preaching his message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, in exhorting people to be free and make others free. We know that he had to face active opposition. He was called *kurahia* or the Mised by the caste-Hindus. He was arrested fo preaching a doctrine which was likely to be dangerous for the peace and tranquility of the country. But nothing daunted. He zealously carried his massage not only through the length and breadth of India, but also to distant places like China, Egypt, Turkey, Ceylon, and Russia.

Humble and Sweet

But all the same, he was full of humility and sweetness. Indeed, he declared that sweetness and humility form the essence of all virtues and good qualities. Throughout his life on this earth, we never find him ill-treating in speech or conduct, even the worst of criminals whom he met and reformed. His sweet smile of love penetrated to the depths of even the foulest hearts, and lighted the holy flame therein. We never find him uttering curses. He loved the sinners and wrong-doers, and sweetly dragged them out of the mire of sin and evil. He was humility itself. In his Songs and discourses he has nowhere arrogantly declared himself to be the only Prophet or Son of God. He calls himself the lowly Minstrel of God, the slave of His slaves, the lowly, the insignificant. He never said that the path advocated by him was the only one

founded on Truth and leading to God. He never said, 'Believe all that I say or be doomed to burn in the eternal fires of hell. All who believe in me will go to Paradise, and all others, to hell. I shall be standing by the throne of God on the day of Judgement and shall intercede on behalf of, and admit into paradise, all who have exclusive faith in me.' No. He never talked in that vein. He simply said, 'In myself I am nothing. I am but a humble instrument of Divine Will. I say what He bids me say. No set of people are specially favourites of God. No intercessor can help you to win paradise. There is no magic word which can shut the door of hell and open that heaven. By your actions alone can you be saved or doomed. So take good heed of what you think, feel, say, or do. The Guru can only set you on the right path and help you to keep steady. But you have to walk on with your own force of will and character. Your belonging to this or that persuasion or creed carries little weight. Your character and conduct mean everything. So trust in God and do the right.'

He taught his disciples to be as tolerant, humble, and sweet tempered, as he himself was. He forbade them to force their faith on others by threat or violence. Even like him, They were to draw and win others by the beauty and sweetness of their lives and persons. They were not to hate or scorn any person, but to return good for evil. His was a message of love and toleration. He did not preach or teach bigotry or fanaticism.

Man of Will and Action

He was a man of will and action. Religion with him did not consist in sitting idle and repeating a certain text or formula. It called him forth to be ever engaged in acts of love and service. The sight of suffering and high-handedness does not leave him cold; does not make him shiver and shiver and withdraw into the regions of his own soul. It calls him forth to act and suffer on behalf of the unfortunate sufferers. He could penetrate to the camp of the dreaded Mughal, Babar, share the sufferings of his own innocent, unfortunate brothers and sisters, and, ultimately, win them their freedom. 'Good actions alone will endure, my soul,' was ever the burthen of his exhortations no less to himself than to his listeners. He never brooded but acted. The strength of his will and his powers of action and endurance are marvellous, indeed. In response to the call of God and humanity, in spite of all the efforts of his parents and relatives, and unmindful of the grave risks which the task clearly involved, he left the restful life of his home and for nearly a quarter of

a century, went about from land to land carrying his message to people of all climes. He travelled over hills and mountains, through deserts and jungles, through lands of cannibals and slave dealers; he met bigots and tyrants; and coquered them all with his sweet, strong will and daring. No founder of any other religion travelled so far and wide or took such great pains to convey his message to so many people. When we remember that all his travels were done in the first quarter of the sixteenth century when, means of communication were so little developed, and religious bigotry and fanaticism raged so hot, we can well realize how supreme must have been the energy, courage and will which inspired Guru Nanak.

Versatile Linguist

Another thing which strikes one is the person of Guru Nanak is his marvellous versatility in picking up readily and well so many languages. We know which countries he visited. We also know that in all of them he held intimate divine discourses with the people. He was not travelling for pleasure or diversion. He was not a mute observer of men, manners and thing. He had a message to deliver. He had to make way to the hearts of the people and win them over to his path of love, service, and worship. This he could not have accomplished in the manner and to the degree that he actually did, if he could not have entered into the thoughts, hopes, and fears of the people, and addressed them words of faith, cheer, courage and consolation in the languages which they spoke and understood.

Witty and Humorous

There was yet another remarkable trait in his person. That was his ready wit and ever-flowing humour. He could hold himself aloof from the whirlpool of the world's activities for a while, and discern the ridiculous in them. He made an extensive use of this faculty in his work. Many examples will readily suggest themselves to the readers where Guru Nanak, by a witty retort or action, drew the people's attention forcibly to the ridiculousness of their beliefs and conduct, and convinced them of their folly. Throwing water to the west at Hardwar, lying with his feet the *Ka'aba*, cooking meat on the occasion of the solar eclipse at Kurkshetar, sitting aloof from the *Arta* at Jagannath, and several other episodes are illustrations of his faculty for wit and humour.

These, in brief, are a few glimpses of the person of Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan Dev called him 'the image of God, nay, God Himself'. To know him fully

one should be as great as he. The features of his mortal countenance are unknow to men: the painter who shows him to our eyes can do so but imperfectly. No one shall know the sound of his voice which yet dominates the ages, nor the brilliance of his eyes by which the infinite goodness has shone into our shades; nor hear the exquisite music of his rebeck which melted the stony hearts of all who had the good luck to listen to the heavenly strains which his divine hands played on it. But he has left to us his Word of God which can help us to reconstruct his spiritual physiognomy and his life. He has laid bare his heart in those sacred pages and has declared, with a clarion call, that those who would converse with him may study his Word of God with a heart full of faith and hope. He has left us his spirit, burn with his love, suffer with his pity, and march with his hope. In them he lives again. Let us all pray that he may teach us to be worthy of being called his, to live and love as he wished us to do and showed us how to do.

THE RELIGION OF GURU NANAK

God, man, and the universe are the main themes of the teachings of all great religions. All religions seek to enlighten man about his right attitude, and hence his duty, towards God, his fellowmen, the things of the world and his own self-soul and body alike. We shall try to give here a brief outling of Guru Nanak's teachings on these essential points.

God

There have ever been two conflicting and opposite conceptions about God. He has been regarded by some as Immanent and by others as Transcendent. Pure immanence, or Pantheism, as it is also called, believes that God is present *equally* in every part of His creation, or, as a typical saying puts it, 'The learned behold God alike in the reverend Brahmin, in the ox, and the elephant, in the dog and in him who eats the flesh of dogs.' No degrees, no difference. This view cuts at the root of all morality. It leaves no room for progress and aspiration. In it there is no place or justification for prohibiting and condemning even the vilest acts. Morality and the highest teachings of all religions become meaningless. There is no God in any way distinguishable from the created things. There is neither good nor bad, neither better nor worse; for everything, just as it exists, is divine and, therefor, equally perfect. Who should presume to improve what in its very nature is as perfect as God Himself? And what exertion need be made for self-improvement; for every man and every beast is divine?

In the opposite view God is regarded as the Omnipotent creating and destroying the world at His sweet will; enthroned above the heavens; Inaccessible and Incomprehensible, the Sole Agent in everything that happens; the Infinite and Absolute who rules the world like an all-powerful despot, unaffected by the wishes, thoughts, and prayers of mortals. Such a view of God leaves us necessarily cold. We feel that we can enter into no relation with such God; that no amount of effort on our part to alter or improve our destiny can be fruitful; for God does all as it pleases Him; that no amount of

exertion or prayer can move Him to alter His arbitrarily prescribed course of things and events, Such a Being can fill us with dread and despair, not with love, faith, and hope. These saving emotions are inhibited completely. This conception leaves us with a 'mighty darkness filling the seat of power' We can have nothing to do with Him. Ultimately, this view leads one to a practical denial of the divine. Knowing that all his acts and their fruits and consequences are fore-ordained by an arbitrary Will, without any regard to his feelings, thoughts, and efforts, man ceases to have any interest in his destiny, and is tempted to give reins to his desires, appetites, and passions. 'Eat, drink, and be merry while you may' becomes his watchword. So this view of God, too, leaves little room for man to make efforts towards bettering himself; his future state, and the world around him. If purely immanent view of divine makes all efforts unnecessary, as it involves an unqualified acceptance of everything just as it is, the transcendental view rules out all such efforts as utterly futile; for no betterment, howsoever necessary, is at all possible.

The question of immanence and transcendence is thus a fundamental issue in all religious philosophy. Guru Nanak has not shirked or evaded it. In all his teachings he has persistently attempted and effected a wholesome reconciliation of these two opposite views of divine nature and action. Thus, in the words which contain the central formula, the *Mul mantra*, of his religion, Guru Nanak gives us a few glimpses of the Lord as under :-

'The One Supreme Being; the Eternal; the Creator Who pervades and sustains all His creation; free from fear and enmity; Timeless; not subject to birth and death; Self-subsistent, and the Enlightener; to be known and realized by the grace of Guru.'

God is thus not the great First Cause, who created the world once upon a time, but the indwelling Spirit that creates and sustains the universe each moment of its existence. He is not equated with His creation; He transcends it; but he is also present in every little part of it all times. This immanence of the transcendent, this presence of the Infinite in our finite lives, is emphasized again and again by the Guru. For example :-

'You alone have created the earth and the heavens.
And you alone art sustaining them at all times.
Wonderful are You; O Lord,
O Supreme Spirit pervading all Nature !

Infinite are You and inscrutable is Your action.
 You dwells in all creatures and all creatures dwell in You;
 You fills the heavens and the earths by an art that none is able to apprehend.'

Asa di Var.

'He who creates the universe and sustains it for aye
 Is to be known in and through His creation.
 Don't look for the True One in zones far away,
 In every heart He dwells as the Spark Divine,
 Look for Him, and find Him, there.'

Rag Vadhans.

'You have created the world,
 You do ever stand in the midst of Your works;
 But, all the same, are ever aloof and away from them all.'

Var Suhi Slok.

'The Infinite, the Absolute, aloof from all.
 Timeless, Unborn, confined to nor race or creed.
 Unpolluted. Inaccessible, and beyond comprehension,
 Having no form, no feature, no shape.
 Such is He.
 But an earnest, persistent search reveals Him indwelling in every heart.'

Rag Bilawal.

'Over land and sea, unseen by all, He acts,
 And through the Word of God proclaimed by the Guru is He seen and realized.'

Rag Sorath.

'He is the life of all life; He inspires, enlightens and sustains every heart,' but He is also the 'One of Whome no effort of human intellect can form an adequate conception'. 'He rules the universe by His Supreme Will from which none is exempt'. All creatures simply carry out His Will but are, at the same time, responsible for their acts as agents having a good deal of choice. He is the Supreme ruler of the world, but He listens to the prayers of devout and faithful. He protects them with His own hands. Nay, He even becomes a willing servant of His servants and runs about in execution of their wishes. But, of course, such servants as come thus to command their Master cease to have any wishes or will apart from the will of their Lord.

Transcendence thus does not mean aloofness or remoteness. God, as transcendent is the Perfect One, Who is the ideal of all human endeavour. Man is not divine as He is, but he is capable of becoming divine. Indeed, to be one with God is the goal of the soul's journey through the cycle of births and deaths. Man has to become like God. If He were only far away, outside of us, we could hope to see Him as we see other object all round us. But He is present also in the innermost depths of our own hearts. By the grace of Guru, the divinely gifted Teacher, we gradually come to know Him; He gradually discloses His features to us as we become able to apprehend the vision. This experience gives us contact with God; not an understanding of God, but living in vital union with Him is what we get. In the end we come to see Him face to face, as surely as we see the material world around us. We find Him in every object, we recognize Him as the inspiring Spirit to whom all progress is due. But the Immanent God is thus always infinitely transcendent. He is ever our ideal. We are ever reaching out to Him.

This need not confound us. We have, in our own human nature, a reflection of this immanence of the transcendent, the presence of the Infinite in the finite world. Who does not feel at times that there are in him, as it were, two selves which are ever at variance if not at war, with each other-the higher and lower selves? Who has not often felt the 'divine discontent' which is the root of all progress? In so far as we give reins to our lower self and make it the judge and master of all our thoughts, feelings and efforts, do we get away from Him. As the wall of the lower self thickens, it conceals Him more and more from our view and shuts out His light from our life. He is then remote and aloof from us. We are then like a child who, in the midst of a big crowd, gets separated from his father. For a time we might feel engrossed in the enticing things before our eyes like the child in the fair; but the moment we become conscious of the absence of the guiding arm, the loving face of the one who has left us, we become bewildered and confused. If however, we hearken to the voice of the higher self, if we make our higher self the master in the household of our personality, if we try to reach out to Him, we find that the wall which had shut out the light of God from us is gradually wearing out and falling away. In time, we come to see Him, as if with our eyes of flesh, dwelling in every heart including our own. We find Him filling all space. We discern Him in ourselves and ourselves in Him. In time a true servant of God becomes indistinguishable from the object of his worship

and devotion; but he never poses to be God. Having infinite power, He is powerless; possessed of surpassing honour and dignity, he is the humblest man on earth.

Duty to God

This, then, is Guru Nanak's conception of God and His creation. Man's duty towards Him springs naturally from this view of God. Man has to develop the divine in him so as to become like God, be one with Him. The human life is an opportunity given him for the attainment of that blissful union. In order to become God-like, he has to develop in his being a love for Him. Man's daily experience tells him how to achieve this. How do we come to love a valued friend but by a constant thinking upon his good and noble qualities which endear Him to us? We love him for his virtues. Similar is the way suggested by the Guru for the development of love for God. Meditation on His divine personal attributes of Beauty, Goodness and Truth, arouses in the heart a desire to acquire those cherished virtues in our own persons. This attitude places us in harmony with the unseen divine forces working in the universe. As we exert to realize, in our actual daily life, the divine virtues which are thus the object of our constant meditations, we come to love Him who is the embodiment of all these charming and coveted qualities.

But, caught in the whirlpool of passions and base desires, borne helplessly along on the tide of the world's allurements and attachment, man hearkens not to the voice of God as He speaks through his dear ones. With every victory of the lower self the wall of the ego gets thicker and thicker, shutting out, more and more, divine Light from his being. A time comes—some catastrophe, some sublime contact with the Almighty—and man is filled with fear for his safety. The world then appears hollow at the core, unreal and unreliable. All those in whom he had been placing his hope and confidence, seem to be but bits of lifeless clay and fall away from him. He finds himself utterly powerless and completely in the hands of a mysterious Supreme Power like kneaded clay in the potter's hands. Blessed is he who gets such an experience. This fear is the beginning of wisdom; for it rescues man from the clutches of his lower self and makes him hearken to the voice of his higher-self, and look up to his Maker and Sustainer. When he finds in Him all those powers and qualities which he lacks, and which he needs most in his journey through life, He begins

to love and adore Him. Indeed, Guru Nanak says again and again that without the fear of Lord, love for Him cannot arise and grow in the heart of man. Be it remembered, however, that this fear is not a depressing, deadening, benumbing, repelling sentiment; but one which fills man with a longing to run to the bosom of the Queller of all fear, the Almighty Father who alone can give him every protection. Reverence and awe are the chief components of this fear. They lead to love. Ultimately all fear disappears. Love becomes all in all. Love fills him through and through. All evil then departs from his heart. No evil can now touch him. By meditating on *Hari*, by living in vital union with Him, the devotee becomes *Hari*; no difference, no distance, and no separateness are left. The two become one. Man becomes as powerful as God, but also as full of divine pity, he thinks not of the power that his union with the Almighty gives him, but only of the duty of love towards his fellow-creatures which that union entails. He can sin no more. For what is sin? 'It is the self-assertion, either of one part of a man's nature against the whole, or of a member of the human family against the welfare of that family and the will of its Father.' But by a revelation of a love which is so intense that no heart which beats can remain indifferent to it, this self-will is overcome and transformed into conformity with the divine Will. Every deed then becomes a song of praise and every thought a movement of love towards Him by whom and in Whom all things and being subsist.

It might be added here that Guru Nanak's ideal for the soul of man is not a condition of nothingness or *Nirvana*, nor a seat in paradise where there would be an abundance of means for sensual enjoyment, but a union—a loving, vital union—with the ever active Creator and Sustainer of the universe. As he says in one of his Songs of the Lord, 'What is paradise or salvation to a man who is athirst for the Lord Himself?' His love for the Lord will be satisfied with no such toys or lifeless rest. The Lord Himself in all His glory and power is his ideal."

Need of a Guru

But this love for the Lord cannot be had altogether at will. No amount of reasoning and argument can establish in us that vital contact with the Divine which is the main spring of this love. Nor can all have revelation direct from God. But if man desires to get a vision of the Eternal Love and power rightly and sweetly ordering all things, he must avail himself of the fruits of the labour

of those who have strived, suffered, and prayed and received the answering light from heaven, the great ones who ever dwelt in God, in whom God ever dwelt, and through whom He worked. For the arousing of that love for the Lord, man needs both the Grace of God and the help and guidance of the divinely gifted Teacher. Guru Nanak does not believe in a pivotal individual on whom can turn the salvation of mankind, or because of whose sacrifice, once upon a time all who put their faith in him are to be saved from the consequences of their actions, or who can intercede with the Great Judge on the Judgement Day in favour of his followers and get them the eternal pleasures of paradise in spite of all their sins. He says, again and again, that human conduct in its widest sense, including thoughts and desires not necessarily externalized in action, will be followed by its natural and inevitable results, not only in this life but also in the life to come. At the same time, he emphasizes the great part which the Guru can play in moulding and transforming this conduct and rescuing the character of man from downward tendencies born of his *karma* or conduct in the past. The Guru awakens the soul in man, rouses him to a consciousness of his higher needs, and sets him on the path of Love, service, and devotion. He shows the Light of the Lord to seeker, and bids him go ahead on his journey to His Door. The Guru washes away the devout seeker's sins in the sense that he eradicates from his character all tendencies born of those sins. He gives him even a glimpse of the Lord and helps him to establish a vital union with Him, but self-help is to be the chief, though not the only, mainstay of a seeker after the Lord. Once, well on the right path, his progress on it will depend on his own attitude and endeavour, guided by the Word of God as given to him by the Guru.

In brief, man's duty towards God consists in honouring and loving Him; in so moulding his character as to make his thoughts, feelings and action conform to His Will; in worshipping Him with zeal and devotion. True worship, it may be added, will always have two sides: a practical side, in our conduct; for our whole life will become an act of worship; but worship must also have its own life in adoration, prayer, and communion. Hence a true worshipper of God can never sit idle or harbour thoughts of pride, hate, and arrogance. Love fills him through and through. The whole universe appears to him to be a part of himself.

Duty to Neighbours

If a man has, with his earnest efforts guided and assisted by the Guru, succeeded in placing himself in the right attitude towards God, he will have no doubts about his duty to his fellow-beings. He will love them as his own self. He cannot even think of tyrannizing over or exploiting his fellowmen. His joy will consist in lovingly helping them all on the path of progress. 'Those who are filled with love of the Lord, love everybody.'¹ If a man becomes fully convinced of the presence of God in, around, and beyond every object that He has created, he ceases to sin against His Law; he can no longer do evil to any of his fellow-beings; for how can he be sincere with God and a hypocrite with men? With most people God is not a living God. He is a pale shadow, floating like an almost extinct memory in the little of religious sentiment that is yet left in them. This shadow has eyes but sees not, ears, but hears not. They do not hesitate to commit their sins in His presence, when the presence of a man or even a child would restrain them. Their God is less than a man. Their religion is but a cloak for their evil, vicious, degenerate selves. They put it on when they are about to plot and act against God and man. They hope to wipe away their sins by a prayer or two at home, an offering at a temple, or a pilgrimage to some holy place. Far, very far indeed, is true religious sentiment from their hearts. A true devotee of God can never let himself fall so low. He adores and worships the Father and loves and serves his fellowmen. He will think neither of deserting his family, renouncing the world and, thereby, becoming a burden on society, nor of aggrandizing himself and his own at the expense of others. He will remain in the world, derive nourishment from it, do his duty in and towards it, but keep his thoughts fixed on God. He will live a balanced life, free from any excess of one sort or another. He will find God in the world, and the world in God. He will lovingly serve his fellow beings; for he will thereby be loving and serving his Father, and also helping himself in his efforts to please and meet Him. He will never think of forcing his convictions on others. He will not tyrannize but love and serve. As the Guru says, 'If we practise active service in the World, then alone shall we find a place in the Presence of the Lord.' 'NO amount of idle talk can lead us to God : it is only by the practice of righteousness that we can win our salvation.'

1. Guru Nanak in *Vadhans Rag*.

Duty to Self

Unlike the materialists who consider matter to be the only reality, Guru Nanak did not consider man's self to consist of the body alone; unlike the ascetics, he did not regard the body as only an encumbrance which has to be subdued, tortured, and reduced, so as to liberate, for upward flight, the human soul; unlike the early evolutionists, he did not regard the human intelligence as a product of mere chance; he did not agree with the Pantheists that man, with all his propensities towards evil, is intrinsically divine and therefore perfect as God. He did not regard the world with all its means of good, pleasure and joy as only a delusion and snare to be avoided and shunned. But he did not, not at same time, take it as the be all and the end all of all human life. He regarded the human soul as a spark from the Spirit of God, capable of becoming one with Him. He regarded the body as the servant of the soul designed to help its progress towards God.

Hence man's duty towards his self consists in his duty to his body, heart, mind, soul, and the world. Considering the body to be a necessary helper of the soul in its journey towards the great Ideal, the disciple has to tend and guard it; but knowing also that it might become a real encumbrance, if it comes to monopolize his attention, he does not pamper it. He treats it as a servant of the soul. He also knows that ignorance is the root of error and sin. Hence he tries to cultivate every means of extending knowledge. All his knowledge has its root in faith and fructifies in love and service. He knows that man's actions are performed in accordance with his nature or self, reason and intellect being used afterwards to justify the course chosen by the self ;of man. He has therefor, to conquer this self, not by torturing the body or by practising austerities, but by hearkening to the Word of God and getting rid of all lower, downward tendencies. He knows that the spirit in him is the real, ultimate self, and he feeds his spirit on the Word of God and develops it by a life oa Love, service, and worship. He gets ready the chamber of his heart for the Divine Guest. He regards the World around him as God's creation and His dwelling place. Hence he does his duty to the world by helping it onwards on the path towards its Eternal ideal. In this way, he lives a life of poise and balance, of service and activity, of devotion and worship, of love and usefulness ultimately. He comes to live in God and God comes to live in him.

Summary

In brief, Guru Nanak preached the religion of work, prayer, and adoration. He told men of their duty towards God, and their brethren, and to their own selves-body and soul alike. He did not indulge in theological quibbles. He dealt with practical life. His creed may be briefly stated as follows :-

Man contains in himself the divine spark which is apt to get walled round by a exclusive attachment to a life of mundane joy and pleasures. Such a course of life develops man's ego and renders him blind to his higher needs and capabilities. The thick and ever thickening wall of this ego can be torn asunder only by hearkening to the Word, which will teach him to look upon God as the Great Ruler of man's destinies. This turning of man's eyes towards God shatters his pride in himself. He longs to rise and be one with his Maker. He then joyfully acts on the Guru's advice. He then realizes that in order to be accepted by God, he must joyfully and lovingly walk through life as a traveller bound for the Eternal Home. He knows that his duty to God consists in loving and honouring Him, in making Him the ideal for the soul's career in this life's journey. His duty to his neighbours consists in regarding them as his brethren in spirit, born of the same Father, and helping them in the path of progress towards the Great Ideal. His duty to his own self consists in tending and guarding the body, cultivating every means of extending knowledge, seeking a full view of Truth by hearkening to and practising the Word of God, doing ever the right in accordance with his knowledge and cultivating communion with the Supreme Spirit, who is the source and the ultimate home of the human spirit. While doing this in perfect faith, he is ever to remember that the love of the Lord cannot be had by man's exertion alone. He ever prays to the Benevolent Father for grace and Enlightenment, and humbly carries on his efforts towards pleasing Him. This attitude saves him from pride, which is the cause of man's fall all round. Thus humbly, with his eyes fixed on the Great Ideal, does he travel through the world as a servant and lover of God and man. In the end he gains acceptance at His door and exerts himself all the more in helping others towards the Goal.

APPENDIX-I

GURU NANAK'S DATE OF BIRTH

In these days the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev is celebrated on the full-moon day of Katak (October-November)-But this is not the correct day or month of the Guru's birth, which occurred in the early morning of the third day of the light half of the month of Baisakh in the Samvat year 1526 or on Baisakh 20, 1526 Bk/15th of April, 1469 A.D.

Reasons in favour of the latter date may be briefly stated as follows :-

(1) In all the earlier records about the Guru the above-said date of Baisakh is given as the date of the Guru's birth. Some of these records are :- (a) The *Old Chronicle or Puratan Janamsakhi*, which was originally written in the time of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru. This is the oldest and most trustworthy detailed record of Guru Nanak's life. (b) The *Sakhi* prepared by Meharban. (c) The *Janamsakhi* by Bhai Mani Singh. This was written in the early thirties of the eighteenth century A.D. (d) The *Mehma Prakash* by Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, written in 1833 Bk/1776 A.D.

It has to be remembered that, according to the testimony of Bhai Gurdas, who was initiated by Guru Amardas and who wrote the *Guru Granth Sahib* at Guru Arjan's dictation, the birth anniversaries of the Gurus were celebrated by the Sikhs of those early days. The writer of the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, who wrote in the time of the sixth Guru, could not have been ignorant of the date and month when Guru Nanak's birth-anniversary was then celebrated. He could not have written *Baisakh*, if the celebration had been taking place in *Katak*. Similarly, Bhai Mani Singh, one of the closest associates and devoutest Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh, and the first *Granthi* of the Temple of God at Amritsar, could not have written *Baisakh*, if the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak had been celebrated in the month of *Katak*. The fact that Bawa Sarup Das, writing in 1776 A.D., gives *Baisakh* as the natal month of the Guru, also shows that till then the month of *Katak* had not been widely associated with the Guru's birth.

(2) The month of *Katak* was given currency as the Guru's natal

month by Bidhi Chand, a descendant of Hindal. 'This man had taken unto himself a Muhammadan woman bound to him by ties of love rather than those of marriage. His followers abandoned him. On that he devised a religion of his own and compiled a *Granth* and a *Janamsakhi* for this purpose.' In the *Janamsakhi* he tried his worst to defame Guru Nanak, to justify himself by attributing his own failing and vices to the Guru, and to lower him in public estimation. His substitution of the month of *Katak* in place of *Baisakh* was done with the last object. According to a superstition, which exists to this day, a child born in *Katak* is considered to be unlucky and harmful.

After this *Janamsakhi* was written, the Hindalas used all their influence to destroy all the older accounts of Guru Nanak's life. We also know that Sikh Manuscripts, which were generally preserved in Sikh Temples, were hunted were hunted out and ruthlessly destroyed during the persecution of the Sikh faith by the Muhammadan authorities. Only copies in the possession of private individuals living away from the field of persecution could escape the rage of the Muhammadans. This explains why the Hindali *Janamsakhi* came to be the only account of the Guru's life that was widely known. But earlier and more trustworthy accounts have since been found.

(3) Though Bidhi Chand distorted the accounts of the Guru's life as early as 1640 A.D., yet the birth anniversary of the Guru continued to be celebrated at Nankana Sahib in the month of *Basaikh* up to 1872.

(4) Even those books, like the *Nanak Prakash*, which support *Kartik Puranmashi*, give the Guru's age at his death as 70 years, 5 months, and 7 days. They also agree that his death occurred in the month of Assu 1596 Bk. Now if the age given above be worked back from the date of his death, it brings the date of birth to Baisakh 1526 Bk. From *Katak* 1526 Bk. to Assu 1596, the period comes to less than seventy years.

All these considerations have made us take *Baisakh* as the natal month of Guru Nanak. Macauliffe also adopted the same date as given here. His discussion of the point is very instructive and has been drawn upon in the above note.

APPENDIX-II

MIRACLES

When I decided to write this book, the first question which I had to answer and decide was what attitude was to be adopted towards the 'miracles' attributed to Guru Nanak, and, of course to other Sikh Gurus. Should I regard them as real occurrences or mere inventions of wonder-loving devotees ?

In order to find an answer to this question I read quite a large number of books, mostly by western writers, because the scepticism in this respect first had arisen in the west. I was convinced that the occurrences considered as 'miracles' which happened to or were done by Guru Nanak were all possible and credible. Even ordinary persons could, with practice and discipline, develop powers that would appear miraculous to ordinary people.

After the publication of the first edition I continued my studies on this topic. I have had occasions to watch exhibitions of such powers by some persons. My conviction has become deeper. I would invite the reader to read the following rather lengthy appendix dispassionately and with an open mind. I am sure he will agree with me.

We find that all great religious leaders all the world over are reputed to have possessed extra normal spiritual or superphysical powers by virtue of which they could perform acts which the common people could neither repeat nor explain. These inexplicable supernormal activities of these towering human personalities filled the common folk with wonder and hence came to be known as *miraculae* or miracles.¹

Since long there have been two views or rather explanations about miracles; one, chiefly current in the west and associated with Christianity, regards miracles as supernatural phenomena due to divine interference in the course of Nature. 'This infraction of laws of nature' is resorted to by God in order to give evidence of His existence and Omnipotence; to attest Divine revelation which, by its very nature, is beyond human reason and under-

1. The word 'miracle' is derived from *miurs* meaning 'wonderful'.

standing, and must be accepted at par on the strength of the accompanying miracles; and to certify that the great one who apparently performs these miracles, or on whose account the laws of nature are for a time suspended, is God's own special messenger.

It is not within the scope of this essay to describe how, by an undue insistence on an attempted explanation of certain spiritual extranormal phenomena associated with the name of Christ, miracles came to be defined in the west as 'infracture of laws due to divine interference'. It might be said at once that this definition, at first 'adopted by Hume's school in the last century, has been tacitly accepted by the Church and has now filtered down to the general public, by whom it is still believed to be correct, and who, therefore, are unable to believe in miracle at all, or even to assent to it, save by referring it to distant time and making Divine "interference" an article of faith.'¹ So much so that reputed Christian divines came to regard miracles, in the sense of infractures of law due to Divine interference, as a vital element of Christianity, 'If miracles be incredible', declared one of them, 'Christianity is false.'²

The other view about miracles, generally current in the east and now coming to be gradually adopted in the west as well, is that they are the manifestations of special spiritual powers which are, in varying degrees, latent in every man and are capable of development by discipline, practice, and concentration. By the practice of yoga, the *Yogis* or *Siddhas* develop occult or miraculous powers called *Siddhas*. Such powers can be acquired by every body. Some persons, on the other hand, are born *Siddhas*. They are, from their very birth, endowed with highly developed spiritual powers so that they can perform acts which to ordinary people appear wonderful, extranormal, or even superhuman or supernatural. But there is nothing superhuman or supernatural in them. They are perfectly natural wonders of highly developed human personality. A miracle is really 'the physical action of an unseen intelligent agent producing results to which known laws are inadequate.'³

Having stated the two views regarding miracles or miraculous powers, we may say that miracles are mentioned in Sikh history as well as in the Sikh

1. V. C. Deserti, *Psychic Philosophy*, p. 31.

2. Dr. Farrar, *The Witness of History to Christ*, quoted in *Supernatural Religion*, p. 7.

3. V. C. Deserti, *op cit*, p. 32.

Scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib*. But miracles in the first sense are not at all associated with the name of Guru Nanak or his successors, and constitute no element or basis of their message. Never did any of the Gurus call upon the people to believe in what he said and have faith in him for this reason that he could show miracles. Guru Nanak's appeal was always addressed to the heart and mind of his listeners. He convinced them of the truth and soundness of his message not by miraculous evidence but by his sweet humility, profound reasoning, soul-stirring Songs and discourses, and above all, by his personal example. He won people because of the fervent hope, faith and joy which he aroused in the hearts of all who had the good luck to meet and hear him. All the same, Guru Nanak's was a fully endowed, extranormally developed human personality. He possessed great inborn, spiritual power, though he never made use of them to gain credence or to convince people of his own greatness, or to avert any personal calamity or suffering. In fact, he disliked, and even condemned, a display of such power for self-aggrandizement, self-glorification, for material gains, for venting one's anger against someone, or under fear or compulsion of any sort. His successors had the same powers and the same attitude about them.

We have it on record that when Guru Arjan Dev was being tortured at Lahore, Main Mir said to him, 'Why are you suffering all these humanly unbearable tortures, when you are master of unlimited powers?' He even offered to use his own spiritual powers that to bow before the Will of God was, for him, better, higher, and sweeter than a show of miraculous powers. That is, he had such powers, but he would not use them for personal ends.

Again, when Baba Atal and Baba Gurditta displayed miraculous powers, Guru Har Gobind was so displeased with them, that they thought it proper to give up their bodies. Their deaths, too were great miracles in themselves.

And when Guru Tegh Bahadur was told that he could save his life by showing a miracle, he spurned the offer and chose to suffer martyrdom. Guru Gobind Singh's words in this connection bear witness to this fact.

But to say that Guru Nanak or his successors did not possess 'supernatural or miraculous powers' or to say that such powers are only fabulous suppositions, is to exhibit either total ignorance or complete mental black-out against all light that might tend to disturb favourite set views.

In *Gurbani* the existence of such powers is acknowledged. People who have tried, have found that unlimited powers can be acquired by practice of

Nam Simrin or meditation on God and His Name. It is emphatically said there that such miraculous powers (*riddhis and siddhis*) are slaves of the Name, they follow those, who practise *Nam Simrin* like bondslaves. But the Sikhs are warned against getting engrossed in them. They are not harmful in themselves, but one must not succumb to their temptation and, thereby neglect the true goal.

But if such powers get displayed or go into work not in order to afflict or vanquish some one but to save or raise, not to curse but to bless, not to mislead any one but to bring him back on the right path, to wake up one's sleeping soul and knit it to the Lord's feet, or to do some positive good to some one in need of it, then they cannot be decried or condemned.

We find the Sikh Gurus making conscious or unconscious use of their unlimited spiritual powers for the good of others. To deny the truth of such incidents, or to try to explain them away in other ways, is to shut one's eyes against truth or to exhibit the all sceptic mentality which assailed the west some time back but which is now fast disappearing.

With the growth of a scientific and critical temper of mind, people began to doubt and question everything whose truth they could not establish and explain by reason, or whose reality they could not demonstrate by experiment. The spiritual phenomena of miracles could not be ordered at will and subjected to experiment, because the conditions necessary for the production of such phenomena were not known. In fact, they are not quite well-known even now. Hence their reality was flatly denied and a belief in them was stigmatized as being due to mental hallucination. It was said, 'The falsity of all miraculous pretensions is proved by the fact that the supposed occurrences of the miracles has been confined to ages of ignorance and superstition, and that they are absolutely unknown in any time or place where science has provided witnesses fitted to appreciate and ascertain the nature of exhibition of supernatural powers. History clearly demonstrates that wherever ignorance and superstition have prevailed, every obscure occurrence has been attributed to supernatural agency, and it is freely acknowledged that under their influence, inexplicable and miraculous are convertible terms. On the other hand, in proportion as knowledge of natural laws has increased, the theory of supernatural interference with the order of Nature had been displaced, and miracles have ceased. Ignorance and superstition created miracles, knowledge had for ever annihilated them.'¹ So it has been said that the age of miracles is past.

1. Summarized from the last Chapter of *Supernatural Religion*.

From denouncing miracles the young enthusiastic devotees of the newly discovered scientific thought went on to deny the existence of God. The young free-thinkers of the Congress of Leige in 1865 could buoyantly declare, 'Science does not deny God; she goes one better. She makes Him unnecessary.'¹ Natural sciences, which were yet in their unripe youth went too far and too fast in their campaign of doubts and questionings. They came to regard matter to be the only reality, and experimental verification and rational intelligibility based on human experience and knowledge to be the only valid means of establishing the reality of anything, fact or phenomenon. As the mind, soul, or spirit could not be separated from the material body and made available for the test-tube method of proving their title to being regarded as real entities, they also went to the rubbish heap. Man was considered to be nothing but his body. Without any past or future other than this life. The human body was considered to be a complex machine composed of blood, bones, muscles, nerves, etc. All his activity was declared to be a result of the physical and chemical changes going on in the body. Thought, which had been regarded as a function and proof of human mind or soul, was pronounced to be 'a secretion of the brain just as bile was the secretion of the liver' The conscious life of man was but the mechanics of the brain 'seen from the other side'².

But then came the limit. Science soon reached the end of its tether. Whereas in 1865 and thereabouts it considered God to be unnecessary, within a few decades it found God to be indispensable for a rational and scientific explanation of the diverse phenomena going on in the universe. All modern scientists of world-wide fame are turning towards God, for the old scientific objections to a belief in God are no longer felt to be urgent. Matter and mind or soul have changed places in the conception of scientists. Now matter is pronounced to be nothing and mind to be everything. The whole universe is declared to be more like a great thought than like a great machine.³ The subject though fascinating, is beyond the scope of this essay and must be left here.

1. William Temple, *Nature and God*, p. 30.

2. Dr Hans Driesch's essay on 'The Breakdown of Materialism' in the *Great Design*.

3. See supplement to this essay, *Science and God*.

Another set of eminent scientists of international repute are busy in Psychic research and are demonstrating the wonders of human personality. The marvels of the soul have amazed the public and challenged the scrutiny of science. 'It seems almost as though the exaggerated denial of materialism, scepticism and rationalism had to be startled with as exaggerated an assertion from the other side. In any case, attention to the psychic has been re-aroused by the abnormal, extranormal and supernormal phenomena, functions, and activities of human personality. It began with mesmerism, a century or more ago and every phase of the movement has been met, as is well-known, by the most bitter hostility on the part of official science. In spite of denial and ridicule, however, the evidence as to so-called mesmeric phenomena accumulated by degrees, and a vast field of research was opened up, until, under the name of hypnotism, it has become part and parcel of accepted scientific investigation Mesmerism has at the same time made us acquainted with a large number of extraordinary phenomena which were previously considered incredible, and has largely aided to build up a new science of *psychiatry*. Many of the beliefs and practices that dogmatic rationalism, and for the matter of that, the whole tendency of modern culture, had hoped to banish for good and all to the limbo of superstition, are back again.....In many directions we may see, if we look for them, revivals of divination seers and soothsayers and prophets, pythonesses, sibyls and prophetesses, tellers of dreams and omens, mantics of every description and by every sorts of contrivance; astrologists and even alchemists; Professors of magical arts and ceremonies; cosmologists, and revelationists; necromancy and communion with spirits; enthusiasm, trance, and ecstasies.....'¹

Miracles in the sense of 'the physical actions of an unseen intelligent agent producing results to which known laws are inadequate' have come within the range of experiments'² They have been shown to be real and true

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1. G. R. S. Mead's essay 'The Rising Psychic Tide' in *Spiritualism, Its Present Day Meaning*, edited by H. Carter, pp. 37-38.
 2. Science cannot now object to the occurrence of miraculous events as we have seen. for such things were deemed impossible or forbidden only, while science was passing through a transient phase interpreting nature in terms of a narrow theory that has now been superseded.'

The Rev. C. W. O. Hara, S. J. Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, in *Science and Religion*.

by the unimpeachable testimony of witnesses provided by science and 'fitted to appreciate and ascertain the nature of such exhibitions' of the wonders of human personality. All these phenomena—the abnormal, extranormal, and supernormal functions and activity of human personality may, under the present state there are such of these phenomena as have been produced, studied, and demonstrated by eminent scientists under the strictest conditions of scientific experiment and observation. They are easier of production. The second class consists of those phenomena which, more wonderful than the rest, have been observed and investigated by reputed scientists of worldwide fame and witnessed by public men of honour and position, which have been testified and authenticated by the very best sort of evidence—the sort of evidence which would be readily accepted in a court of law—, but which have not yet been produced and reproduced at will by other investigators.

It is impossible to give here any detailed account of these interesting phenomena. They can be only enumerated here so as to serve as stimulus for further study to those who have the will, and as an aid to faith in the teachings of religion to those who might be disturbed by doubts and questionings. These phenomena may be classified and summed up as follows :-

1. Sounds-raps, taps, blows, and knocks—occurring in different places, in full light or darkness, but without any seen or known cause or agency. These sounds 'vary in intensity from faint, gentle raps as may be produced with the end of a knitting needle to blows which shake the room, and of a knitting needle to blows which shake the room, and are as readily produced on a tumbler, held in the hand of the experimenter, on the distant corner of the floor and ceiling, on a sheet of glass, on a stretched wire, on a tambourine, or in a living tree (Crookes), as on a chair or table. They will follow a code such as in used by telegraphists'¹

2. Phenomena 'which demonstrate the application of a distinct physical force to inanimate bodies without contact of any person. This class is particularly interesting; for it is actually a transference of energy by means at present entirely unknown. A pendulum enclosed in a glass case cemented to the wall can be set in motion,'² Articles such as tables, chairs, books, etc. can be raised in the air and transported from one room to another, without contact of any

1. V. C. Desertis, *Psychic Philosophy*. pp. 60-61.

2. Ibid., p. 61.

person; a feather placed in one of the pans of a balance can more than counter-balance a heavy weight placed in the other.¹ A recent instance of possession and exhibition of such power was reported in the papers in March 1968 under the caption '*A Stare-and the Clock Stops*' as follows :-

'Moscow, March 17 Reuter: Melya Mikhailova, a middle-aged Moscow woman can stop a clock just by looking at it, it was reported here today.'

'She can also make the clock run faster, move food and crockery across a table top, and set a compass needle spinning like the second-hand of a watch, the newspaper "*Moskovskaya Pravda*" said.

'All this is done by intense concentration and a frowning stare one of the newspaper's reporters said after visiting Miss Mikhailove.

'The woman's feats have been filmed and she has been studied by scientists, all of whom concluded that she possessed the power of telekinesis-mind over matter.

'None of the scientists who have studied Miss Mikhailova can explain her ability, but a group of them offered similar theories-all involving the brain's generation of static electricity, gravitational fields, and electro-magnetic forces.

'One of them told the newspaper, "This is not mysticism but a physical and physiological fact that demands further study"

The reporter suggested that Miss Mikhailova's ability dated from World War II when she was seriously wounded while serving as a radio-operator in a tank unit.

'The report of her case came four years after several stories appeared here about Russian women who could see through doors and walls, read books with their fingers, and determine the colour of paint inside a closed can.'

3. Levitation or rising-or flying as it may also be called-of a person in the air while standing or sitting, apparently against the action of gravity. In cer-

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1. While discussing the phenomena of motoricity or movements of objects without contact, Dr Paul Joire says that it can be demonstrated that there exists a force capable of being projected from the human body and of setting object in motion without contact. This can be done by means of an apparatus invented by him and called the 'Sthenometer'. He says that the 'Sthenometer' He says that the force emanating from a person's body varies with different persons and with the state of health in the same person. In view of this, all that we have to assume in order to admit the truth of what is said above, is that some persons are endowed with this force in much higher degrees.

tain cases chairs may also be raised along with the sisters. The elevation may be from a few feet to the height of a room. Instances are reported where persons have been bodily transported from one street to another over and across several lofty buildings¹ or from one cliff to another across wide ravines.

4. Insensibility to heat. Red hot coal, glass, or metal may be handled with impunity. Persons may walk, to and fro, on beds of flaming embers. Dr Pascal in *Annals de Science Psychiques* has given an account of three occasions—October and December 1898 and February 1998—when, after the fire had been ‘controlled’ by a Brahmin at Benares, with his incantations and ceremonial several persons of all ages and ranks with naked feet crossed and re-crossed a bed of live coals. On one occasion he and a Frenchman, the son of Dr Javal of Paris, also walked on a bed of fire. At the end of the article he writes, ‘In our own days the medium Eglinton, home, and many others have been able to take live coals in their hands and hold them for some time without being burned. These phenomena are, therefore, not new. Those at which we were present are sufficient proof to us of the existence of a power capable of subduing to a considerable degree the destructive energy of fire. It was not extinguished but it did not burn. We consider that a furnace, similar to that which we have seen, could not be crossed with the naked feet in the conditions stated, without serious burnings resulting each time’² Keeping all this in view, can any one question the story regarding Kauda, the cannibal, and Guru Nanak Dev?

5. Writing, either through a planchet, or by a pencil laid on paper and left there, or on paper without any visible pencil. Automatic writing by some persons in languages and about persons, places, and events, quite unknown to them, has also been recorded by several reputed investigators.

6. Visual phenomena or apparitions, usually seen in a faint light. Sometimes the appearances take the form of small luminous spheres from the size of a pea to that of the tennis ball, which float about in the room or round the heads of the sitters, or they may be pointed flames or pale luminous clouds, which may or may not develop into faces, hands, or even whole human figures. These figures can talk, shake hands, and embrace. They have also been photographed alone or seated by the side of the experimenter.

7. Chemical changes. The colour of water in sealed bottles has been recorded to have changed; unexposed photographic films carefully sealed

¹ Leadbeater, *Invisible Friends*.

² Dr Paul Joires, *Psychical and Supernatural Phenomena*, p. 78.

have been impressed with various figures. Thought photography has been successfully attempted.

8. Apparent penetration of matter by matter. This class of phenomena is the most difficult to account for in the present state of knowledge. Rings sewn and sealed in cloth may be taken out without disturbing the cloth, stitches, or the seals; solid articles like flowers, harmoniums, flutes may pass through closed doors or walls of a room; simple knots may be tied in an endless cord; steel wires may be magnetized or any article may be electrified by the simple contact of hand; the arm or back of a chair may be hung from a person's arm while his hand is securely tied and sealed with that of another and there is no other way for the chair to hang thus but by the passage of its arm or back through the person's arm; a person enclosed in an iron cage whose door and bars were securely sealed has been recorded to have come out of the cage without disturbing the seals. These phenomena might be taken to demonstrate the possibility of a disintegration and reintegration of material substances including the human body.

9. Externalization of sensibility. It is possible for a hypnotizer to suggest to his subjects that their sensibility has left them and has been transferred to another object—a glass of water, a board of wood, a piece of cloth, or their own shadow on the wall. Then the subjects will feel everything done to those objects and nothing done to their own bodies.

10. Lucidity, clairvoyance and clairaudience or the faculties of seeing and hearing things invisible and inaudible to humanity at large have been developed and demonstrated in numerous cases. It has been shown that it is possible for man to break the barriers of time and space and look into the past or future and across matter and distance. In fact, it can be said now that "modern, hard-hearted, sceptical is suggesting that we possess a sixth sense that is free in time and space,"¹

There have been numerous instances of the exhibition of such faculties which have stood the tests of scientific investigation. The faculty of clairvoyance is being utilized for good purposes, as will be seen from the following extract from an article by Simon Marsh, published in the Sunday Magazine Section of the *Tribune* dated March 3, 1967, under the caption 'Clairvoyants beat the rest, Ghost-hunters are not just luck' :-

1. George Godwin, "Science Tests the Sixth Sense", an article in the *Daily Sketch*, dated August 7, 1935.

'A new generation of scientific clairvoyants are being taken seriously by police-and no wonder. They are using their psychic powers to solve crimes including murders that have defied detection by orthodox means. Their record is so startling that it can no longer be discounted as coincidence or luck.

'A new and curious crime-detection weapon is having a remarkable run of success in the American State of New Jersey. Last year, three killers and a dozen other law-breakers have been brought to justice by a clairvoyant.

'It would be easy to dismiss Mrs. Florence Sternfels as a crank. But case-hardened detectives now know better. Mrs. Sternfels, a plump 60 years old grandmother, is a psychical crime-buster.

'The factual records of Mrs. Sternfels and other clairvoyants can no longer be dismissed as coincidence or luck.

'More enlightened police experts are beginning to believe that a whole new field of crime-detection could be opened up, once more knowledge is obtained at out premonitions, "second sight", and extra-sensory perception.

'The powers of a new-generation of "scientific" clairvoyants are so accurate and uncanny that they cannot be disregarded. ♣

'From her home in Edgewater, New Jersey, Mrs. Sternfels has located missing people, caught thieves, and helped to crack baffling cases of murder and sudden death.

'Faced with actual evidence of her power, the New Jersey police have been forced to take Mrs. Sternfels seriously. They regularly consult her on unsolved crimes.'

'Here is a typical example of the sort of thin she can do. Last year she was consulted by the millionaire, Williams Coors, of Golden, Colorado about the disappearance of his brother which had baffled the police for two months.

'Mrs. Sternfels told them, 'I see a pool of blood on a bridge, I see two bullets. Your brother was followed as he returned from the factory. His body will be found at the end of the summer.' It was. Adolph Coors had been shot twice in the back.

'Florence sternfels is by no means the only psychical crime buster who is helping the police. An elderly fortune-teller in Georgia has successfully predicted when and where a body would be discovered and who was responsible for the killing....

'The British police had an insight into the working of the "sixth sense" when 10-year old Mona Tinsley left her Nottinghamshire home and was never seen again.

'Estelle Roberts, a well-know medium, claimed the missing child had appeared to her in a vision and told her she was dead. She said that the child had been strangled and her body taken to a house and hidden behind a water tank. Later, the body was removed and thrown into a river

'When Mrs. Roberts visited the town, she went immediately to a house occupied by Frederick Nodder, a former lodger in the Tinsley home. From there she went to the banks of the Idle river. "Mona's body is there," she said. 'Later the body was recovered from the river...and Nodder confessed to the girl's murder.'

After giving another interesting case of similar detection of the killers of another person, the writer concludes, 'There are dozens of other cases in which people claiming to have second sight have solved crimes which have defeated more orthodox forms of detection.'

11. Projection of the double. It has been recorded that some persons possess or can acquire the power of appearing in two different and distant places and being seen in both by all. For example, Horold Sherman, in his book '*You Live after Death*' gives verified cases of 'Projection of the Psyche'. In one such case a person named J. Loose, living near Hollywood, California, is described as one who 'possessed and could demonstrate, at will, unusual mental faculties'. This person was able to leave his body at will and appear to friends far away, as H. Sherman himself found the casw one day. Loose later told Sherman, 'For some years now I have had the ability to leave my body and consciously appear in spirit from at distant places on visits to friends- One of my friends I meet in this way in John Carlos, a highly developed priest living in South America. At times he visits me in the same manner....We communicate telepathically and when he has something of spiritual importance he wants to discuss, either he or I go to the other.' He added that when they met in this way, in the park, 'to the casual observer, we would look just like two ordinary men, inconspicuously dressed-such old men as you often see whiling away their time on park benches throughout the country.'

It is recorded in *Janamsakhis* that whenever Guru Nanak's sister, Babe Nanaki, felt a yearning to see him and fervently desired it, he appeared to her at once, and took food prepared by her although, at the time, he was physically thousands of miles away. After reading Sherman's above-said book, none should say that this could and did never happen.

12. Thought-transference and thought-reading. These faculties have been proved beyond all manner of doubt to be perfectly human faculties

capable of great development. Thoughts have been sent and caught across vast distances.

In his book referred to above, Harold Sherman refers to 'Wilkins-Sherman experiments' in which he made 'intensive long distance telepathic tests conducted with Sir Hubert Wilkins, Arctic explorer, under conditions set by Dr Gardener Murphy, then head of the Parapsychology Department of Columbia University.'

The Faculty of mind-reading or thought-reading possessed or developed by some is utilized for crime detection. Here is a case given by Siman Marsh in the article mentioned above :-

'The Canadian police, baffled by the apparently pointless shooting of four people on a ranch near Edmonton, Alberta, brought in the Viennese doctor, Maximilian Langsner.

'Police suspected that a neighbour, Henery Booher, had committed the crimes, but had no evidence to prove it.

'Dr Langsner attended the inquest. Afterwards he told the police; "Booher is the murderer...I was able to read his thoughts in court. He was thinking of where he had hidden the murder weapon".

'Next day, the doctor led detectives to a spot on the Booher ranch and there, lying in the long grass, was a rifle. But Booher had still to be proved guilty. Dr Lengsner sat for hours on a chair outside Booher's cell "Intercepting his thoughts".

'The doctor explained that Booher sneaked out of church during a Sunday service to commit the murder, and a woman saw him leave. The next day a woman, questioned by detectives, said she had seen Booher leave the church and return later. Faced with this evidence Booher broke down and confessed to the crime.'

13. Healing with mesmeric powers. A hypnotized person can be made to see, feel, and hear, exactly in accordance wishes of the hypnotizer. He may be made to drink without water and eat without food, enjoy from a pebble the fragrance of a rose, feel burnt by touching a piece of ice, feel his hand freezing in contact with a live coal, all under the suggestion of the hypnotizer. It has been possible to cure not only serious constitutional disorders of body in this way, but also to heal permanently diseased limbs, for which amputation had been declared to be the only course. Deep wounds have been produced and then made to disappear by mere suggestion.

14. Healing by prayer and spiritual powers. Cases of such miraculous cures have been reported and commented upon by many. An interesting example of such cures by prayer was some time back given by Alan Mason in an article bearing the caption 'Long Distance Prayer Cured a Paralysed Dog. He Heals Animals by Faith'. The article is reproduced below :-

'George Tomkins took the blind spaniel and placed it on a table, "He's been blind for five months now," said the dog's owner. Tomkins laid his hand over the animal's eyes and spoke quietly to it for several minutes. He then looked up at the owner and in a soft voice announced, "He can see now."

'This recent near miraculous cure was no freak or chance incident. During the past 35 years, George Tomkins has treated more than 5,000 animals by prayer and laying his own hands on them. The majority of these have been cured. Some people call him a faith-healer and a spiritualist. He makes no such claim, He says quite simply, "I have a gift that allows me to heal sick animals."

'Tomkins cannot explain how he cures animals. He attributes his remarkable power to Divine Healing and says that he is a channel of God's love. "I do not cure the animals", He says. "It is the work of God."

'He gives his services entirely on free basis, because he believes that he would lose his power if he ever charged for healing. He can cure animals even if they are not brought to him. They can be thousands of miles away. He has the ability to project his curative powers over vast distances, when the effect is the same as if they were under his hands at his home. All he does is to pray.

'Yet, Tomkins says that he is not what one could call a religious man. He does not go to church every Sunday. All he knows is that he has been given a wonderful power, and that the power is a real one because it works. His files are crammed with letters from grateful pet and animal owners all over the world.

'One of Tomkins' most astonishing cures concerned a dog called Sion which was suffering from hard pad an "incurable" canine disease. He was off his food, coughed persistently, and was unable to walk.

'His owner, Miss Prys, knew that even if by some miracle the dog did survive, it would never walk again. Then she heard about George Tomkins and contacted him in his home in Surrey.

'He said he would do what he could to help, and that he would pray for the dog...The dog was cured of an apparently incurable canine disease overnight by his long distance prayer. Next morning there was no sign of paralysis and he was not only lively but hungry-a complete cure.

'Another small spaniel underwent three major operations for cancer before she was six years old. Just as her mistress was beginning to believe that she was completely cured, an enormous swelling appeared under her ribs.

'George Tomkins was asked to say prayers for the spaniel and by the following day the tumour had completely disappeared and this time for good, because she died at the ripe age of 14.

'Flu in cats is said to be incurable. This disease paralyses them; their bodies become stiff and twisted and their jaws lock. George Tomkins has cured many cats of this disease-the latest being a cat called Ginger Tom, owned by a Mrs. Stokes.

'When she wrote to Tomkins, Ginger Tom had been in a coma for nearly twelve hours and was as near dead as an animal could be. She continued watching the cat while she worked out the time when the healer would start saying his prayers.

'At last the time came when she felt sure that Tomkins had begun his prayers, and sure enough, at just the moment a seeming miracle happened. She saw a rippling movement and the cat's fur and life seemed to ebb back into the stricken creature's body.

'Then, dramatically, he stretched one limb after another and stood up. Within a few minutes Ginger Tom was walking around, his body relaxing all the while and his locked jaw loosening. The cure was as quick as this.

'George Tomkins' wonderful healing powers work just as effectively on other domestic animals. Many cows and horses have been literally brought back to life by the prayers of the amazing man.

'Many of these have also had apparently incurable diseases. Asthma in horses is more often than not a death sentence. But even this disease has yielded to the powers of George Tomkins.

'It is perhaps dangerous to use the word "miracle" in discussing the fantastic and inexplicable cures that are brought about by faith and prayer. But if there was case when this word could legitimately be used, it is in attempting to explain the powers of George Tomkins. His powers defy rational explanation of the normal sort.'

In India many stories are current about supernatural powers possessed by *Sadhus*, *Sannyasis*, and *Faqirs*. Read, '*Towards the Silver Crests of the Himalayas*' to get a fascinating account of such powers exhibited by a great *Sadhu*, Gurudeo, especially, his cure of a person, Vinayak, whom many able

Doctors had pronounced to be incurable and almost dead. He was far away. A disciple of his, a brother of the dying man, prayed to him to come and save his brother. After a time the disciple heard Gurudeo's ringing voice telling him that he would be there shortly and would see that everything was all right. He came, put his hand on the forehead of the sick man, and patted his head gently. Then he said to him, 'You are all right and there is nothing to worry about,' Gurudeo sat on his bed and was silent for a few minutes. In about ten minutes Gurudeo rose from the bed and left the room, saying, 'Kindly don't disturb him till he wakes up of his own accord.'

The man got well in no time. The Doctors said to Gurudeo 'We admit our defeat. it is something which is really supernatural. We were confident of our knowledge and we had come to a definite conclusion that Vinayak was beyond recovery. We now know that there is a force unknown to us, rather to science, that can restore life to a dying man. It is not only a wonder but beyond intellect to understand how it could be done.'

15. Among the performances of a *Faqir* recorded by Loius Jacolliot, Chief Justice of Chandarnagar, we find that seeds which required some weeks to germinate were made, in an hour or so, to grow into plants above a foot in height.

16. Cases have recorded where men have demonstrated their ability to arrest the movement of their hearts and arteries at will and die or expire at pleasure, and then revive when they so liked. This experiment has been performed in the presence of medical men who satisfied themselves by all sorts of tests that the person who had undertaken the demonstration had actually died and then come back to life. A *Faqir*, after he had stopped his breathing, was buried by General Ventura in the presence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and many of his *Sardars*. He was disinterred after some months when he come back to life. Several Europeans were present at the performance.

17. By some disciplinary exercises and practice, and sometimes as a natural, born gift, some persons possess the power to live without food for long periods. Here is a verified case reported in the press in December, 1965 :-

'Lucknow, Dec. 8 (UNI). Twenty-five years old Ram Lakhan has been living virtually without food for 22 days at Raj Bhawan here. 'Mr. Biswanath Das, Uttar Pradesh Governor, met Ram Lakhan recently at an *ashram* in Shahjahanpur where he told the Governor of his capacity to "survive without

food". "The Governor said that Ram Lakhan's feat was a challenge to doctors and scientists to see how anyone could live without food."

18. Turning base metals like lead and mercury into gold. Since time immemorial Indian '*Rasayanacharyas*' have been, it is said, making gold from other metals. Here is a recent case as reported by Dr P.D. Giridhar, Bhiwani, in a letter published in the *Tribune* dated August 8, 1968 :-

'In 1943 an Indian chemist demonstrated the manufacture of gold from mercury in the presence of Mr. Jugal Kishore Birla, Mr. Mahadev Desai, Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, Goswami Ganesh Dutt and two other prominent persons in Delhi. On the first day he transformed one *tola* of mercury into gold in their presence. The product was rigidly tested by specialists and was declared to be real gold.

'Next day, he turned one *seer* of mercury into real gold in their presence. This gold was donated to some institutions by Mr. Birla. After the death of the *Rasayanacharya*, Mr. Birla got the story of the chemist's performance inscribed on a big marble tablet and had it fixed in the *Yagyashala* of the Birla Mandir, New Delhi.

'Anybody can read that tablet in the *Yagyashala* of the temple. Everybody will deplore the whim of the *Rasayanacharya* in having taken away the secret with him.'

19. Insensibility to pain from wounds etc. Here is another instance of 'miraculous' powers which can be developed through *Yoga* and which the Great Ones possess as God given gifts. In the *Tribune* dated July 29, 1969 appeared the following item under the caption 'Yoga Follower Enjoys Crucifixion':-

'Newcastle (South Africa), July 8 (AP)-A man was nailed to a cross here while helpers played a dim Reeves recording of "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere", over a loudspeaker system.

Bearded Yoga follower Pieter Van Den Berg, who works as a bartender in this natal province town was demonstrating that "man is master of himself."

A crowd of about 500 assembled in a field outside the town after he announced he would allow himself to be crucified. Dressed in a red loin cloth and garlanded with beads and flowers, he told onlookers :

"I am not here to test God nor to personify Him. Yoga means that my spirit is part of the divine spirit and I am one with God.

Then he walked barefoot over a bed of glowing coals. Three inch needles were pressed through his arms.

Onlookers gasped as Mr. Den Berg lay down on a six-foot wooden cross and helpers drove long steel nails through his palms and his right foot. A steel spoke pierced the flesh of his left thigh.

The cross was lifted and planted upright. Mr. Den Berg chanted a Sanskrit song. Smiling, he said he was very happy. There is no such thing as death. It is a pleasure to die.

Tears came from his eyes when he was lifted down half an hour later. "I am crying because I am so happy", He said.

Witnesses later said there were only slight traces of blood on his hands and feet to show where the nails had been.'

One word more about these wonderful phenomena. There will seem much in what has been written above which may startle the reader and make him shake his head; but he must remember that most of the phenomena summed up and classified above are not mere fabrications. "That they have occurred is matter for evidence in the strictly scientific sense of the word. None are to blame for scepticism",¹ but it must be remembered that a "presumptuous scepticism that rejects facts without examination of their truth is in some respect more injurious than credulity".² If these phenomena appear to be "in opposition to known laws of Physics and Mechanics", it must be remembered that "Physics at the present day is in direct opposition to the Physics of a hundred years ago." Who knows what it may be a hundred years hence ? Those who study these things for themselves will willingly concede that miracle in the sense of effects produced by the unseen intelligent forces is an experimental fact. But this miracle, be it noted is not due to effect of an almost unknown force; it is not an invasion or evasion but a revelation of law. If miracles cannot be so readily produced at will as we would wish, the reason is that as yet the conditions governing the action of the forces producing them are but very imperfectly understood.

It now remains to mention a few books by studying some of which the reader may convince himself of the truth of all that had been said above. So here they are :-

1. *Psychic Philosophy*, p.117.

2. Humboldt, quoted in *Psychic Philosophy*.

3. Dr P. Joire, *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, p. 414.

1. *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, Dr Paul Joire.
2. *Psychic Philosophy*, V. C. Desertis.
3. *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena*, Dr W. J. Crawford.
4. *An Experiment with Time*, J. W. Dunne.
5. *Report on Spiritualism*, London Dialectical Society.
6. *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, A. R. Wallace.
7. *Incidents in My Life*, D. D. Home.
8. *The Night Side of Nature*, Mrs. Crowe.
9. *The Occult Arts*, J. W. Frings
10. *The Life Everlasting and Psychic Evolution*, J. W. Frings.
11. *Research in Spiritualism*, Sir W. Crookes.
12. *The Human Personality and Survival of Bodily Death*, F. W. H. Myres.
13. *Occult Science in India*, Louis Jacolliot.
14. *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, Sir William F. Barrett.
15. *Psychic Facts-a Summary of Scientific Evidence*, Y. W. H. Harrison.
16. *Transcendental Physics*, Prof. Zollner.
17. *Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, Sir Arthur Conodyle.
18. *You Live After Death*, Harold Sherman.
19. *Towards the Silver Crests of Himalayas*, G. K. Pradhan.

Numerous books have been written and are being written on this topic which is engaging more and more the attention of the educated public, specially in the west.

SCIENCE AND GOD

Since the advent of scientific thought there has grown up a strong antagonism between science and religion. Science not only denied God but also 'made Him unnecessary'; for it believed that it could rationally explain the universe and its phenomena without supposing God much better than could religion explain them with the help of its God. But when the early enthusiasm was over and sobriety returned with maturer experience, the old cocksureness was gone, science found that even for a rational and scientific explanation of the universe and its phenomena, God is absolutely indispensable. It is not possible to trace here the gradual breakdown of materialism: but as it has become a fashion in this country to take all ideas from the west and to scoff at all that had not obtained the blessings of the western thinkers, and as a wave of irreligion and atheism is springing up in our country in imitation of

what once used to be the current habit of thought in the west, we shall quote here opinions of some of the leading scientists of the west. Perhaps our growing generation may learn from them to give a little more thought to things of the spiritual world.

"I believe in God, the God of Spinoza; who reveals Himself in the orderly harmony of the universe. I believe that intelligent is manifested throughout all nature."

Albert Einstein

"Materialism and Determinism, those household gods of nineteenth century science, which believed that this world could be explained in mechanical and biological concepts as a well-run machine, must be discarded by modern science to make room for a spiritual conception of the universe and man's place in it. The old Atheism is gone. Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience; all else is merely remote inference; religion belongs to the realm of spirit and mind, and cannot be shaken."

Sir Arthur Eddington

"The material world which has been taken for a world of blind mechanism, is in reality a spiritual world seen very partially and imperfectly. The only real world is the spiritual world..... The truth is that not matter, not force, not any physical thing, but mind, personality, is the central fact of the universe."

J.S.Haldane

"For several decades the results of scientific investigation appeared to be leading directly towards a mechanic explanation of the nature of cosmic energy. All that has changed in the last few years. We now know that the latest of the analysis of material objects, when we penetrate as far as we may into the secret of the nature of things, gives no wholly different impression from that which our fathers had a generation ago. The nearest approach we have thus far made to the ultimate in our analysis of matter and of energy indicates that the universal reality is mind. Matter becomes simply an expression of mind. This represents my belief about God. It leads naturally to a statement about personality. For me God is everything in the universe which tends to produce a fine personality in a human being."

Kirtley F. Mather

"The old-fashioned evolutionary attitude was that the world as we know it developed as a result of chance, variations of all kinds occurring; some of which would be more suited to the conditions than others, and therefore, surviving. More recent thought has found this viewpoint increasingly difficult to defend.

"To the Physicist it has become clear that the chances are infinitesimal that a universe filled with atoms having random properties would develop into a world with the infinite variety that we find about us. This strongly suggests that the evolutionary process is not a chance one, but is directed towards some definite end. If we suggest that evolution is directed, we imply that there is an intelligence directing it."

Arthur H. Crampton

"God is the unifying principle of universe. No more sublime conception of God has ever been presented to the mind of man than that which is furnished by evolution when it represent Him as manifesting Himself through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man, and in the age-long inbreathing of life into constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his god-like person."

Robert A. Millikan

"Today there is a wide measure of agreement which on the physical side of science, approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a nonmechanical universe; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter: we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter... The universe can be best pictured, although still very imperfectly, and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker. If the universe is a universe of thought, its creation must have been an act of thought. Time and space must have come into being as part of this act. Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the Creator as outside time and space, which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas. In watching the metamorphosis of the old picture of nature of the universe into the new picture which science today is giving us, we do not see the new picture, which science today is giving us, we do not see the additions of mind to matter so much as

the complete disappearance of matter. Nothing in matter survives. The background of universe, the reality, is mind."

Sir James Jeans

In addition to the views of above mentioned scientists of international repute, we may notice here the views of fourteen other equally eminent scientists of world-wide reputation who, in their essays in *The Great Design*, give their various answers to the following questions :-

"Is the World a soulless mechanism ? Is it a work of blind chance ? Is materialism true ? Is the universe, as Huxley asked, "a mud pie made by two blind children, Matter and Force ?" To quote the words of the publishers printed on the wrapper :- "Many thinking men and women fail to realize that modern science does not sanction such a view. In this volume 14 men of international eminence, each in his own branch of science, show that the ordered harmony, the mathematical precision, the great design of the whole, point, with ever-increasing force, to a purposing and Directing Mind at the back of the great drama of creation; that the discoveries of science strengthen, not weaken, belief in an Infinite Creator." The book shows by facts that in Nature's works we can see indications of Order and Intelligence, the work of Mind—indications, as Spinoza said, that the universe is but the reflected thought of God."

I congratulate you heartily on Producing a book on the life of "Guru Nanak" which is as valuable as your previous one on Guru Gobind Singh. The combined appeal to intellect and sentiment which is a feature of your work and method of presentation is something uncommon among writers on the lives of our Gurus.

Principal Bawa Harkishan Singh.

It is well written and profusely documented. There is no doubt that it contains more matter than any of the books on the subject written in English and may be trusted to give the best Sikh version of the great Guru's life.

Principal Teja Singh

...An interesting and valuable addition to books on Sikh Religion and History. The learned author gives a fascinating account of Guru Nanak's life, his missionary tours, and traces the development of his all-inclusive dynamic creed.

The book is written with sincerity and conviction and profusely illustrated with quotations from the hymns of Guru Nanak. It can be placed with confidence in the hands of all enquirers—young and old.

It is a fine companion to the author's scholarly '*Life of Guru Gobind Singh*'.

Principal Kashmira Singh

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LIFE OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

.....a complete but concise life-sketch of this prophet of freedom to whose hallowed memory the Sikhs, nay, all Indians, are so devoutly attached...will be found a great help and source of perennial inspiration to all those desirous of obtaining a clear insight into the real spirit of Sikhism exemplified in the life of this prophet of freedom and humanity; a life which should be studied by every Indian. The author has disentangled a lot of confused and conflicting accounts about the Guru's life and teachings, and successfully cleared the current misunderstandings and erroneous beliefs about them. He has consulted all the authentic and original sources and has thus given an amount of information which is thoroughly accurate and reliable. His style is simple and catchy and makes a ready appeal.

The Amrit Bazar Patrika, Calcutta.

....The first serious attempt in English at a clear, comprehensive, intelligent, and intelligible exposition of the Guru's life.....The author has taken special pains to sift the seed from the tare.

In clearing vital issues, exploding accepted myths, and throwing additional light on certain highly controversial points in the Guru's life, S. Kartar Singh's book has rendered a signal service to impartial students of history.

The Tribune, Lahore

....In his biography of this great Sikh Guru, Prof. Kartar Singh has sought to dispel certain erroneous ideas about Guru Gobind Singh's career which have been given currency to by some English and Indian historians. Prof. Kartar Singh has convincingly shown the baselessness of such suggestions.

With the help of materials which were not hitherto available to most of the biographers of the Guru, Prof. Kartar Singh has told the stirring story of Guru Gobind Singh's career in a manner as arresting as it is impartial.

The Bombay Chronicle, Bombay.

Clearly the best book in English written so far about the great Guru Gobind Singh. The author has worked hard to put the historical truth faithfully.. He has successfully tackled all misrepresentations and prejudices that have accumulated round the personality of the Guru. The style is impassioned but restrained, the choice of words is happy, and the arrangement to

topics, appropriate...

Principal Bawa Harkishan Singh:

It is an authentic account of Guru Gobind Singh's life, being the result of the author's long and close study of the original material, some of which was inaccessible to previous writers on the subject. The book is a monument to the author's industry and research, and deserves to be read by all impartial students of history.

Principal Teja Singh .

...I heartily congratulate you on the production of a short life of Guru Gobind Singh which is not only brimful of interest, but, as far as I can judge, also historically correct.

Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni, Lahore.

I must say that Sardar Kartar Singh has taken great pains in collecting his material from various sources, both original and secondary and has put together that material in an excellent form. Besides its great value as a detailed biography of Guru Gobind Singh, I regard this work as contributing a very important chapter in the history of the Sikhs.

Prof. Sita Ram Kohli.

REKINDLING OF THE SIKH HEART

It intelligently analyses the cause of irreligion, and suggests effective remedies which, if acted upon, will remove the complaint. The author seems to have laboured hard on it and has produced a book which will prove very useful to the general reader as well as to those entrusted with the work of preaching and carrying on the mission of the Gurus. Even non-Sikhs will find much useful material for their benefit....The book is really a very good addition to Sikh literature and I congratulate the author on writing it.

Principal Teja Singh.